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LIVES OF THE  
PRESIDENTS

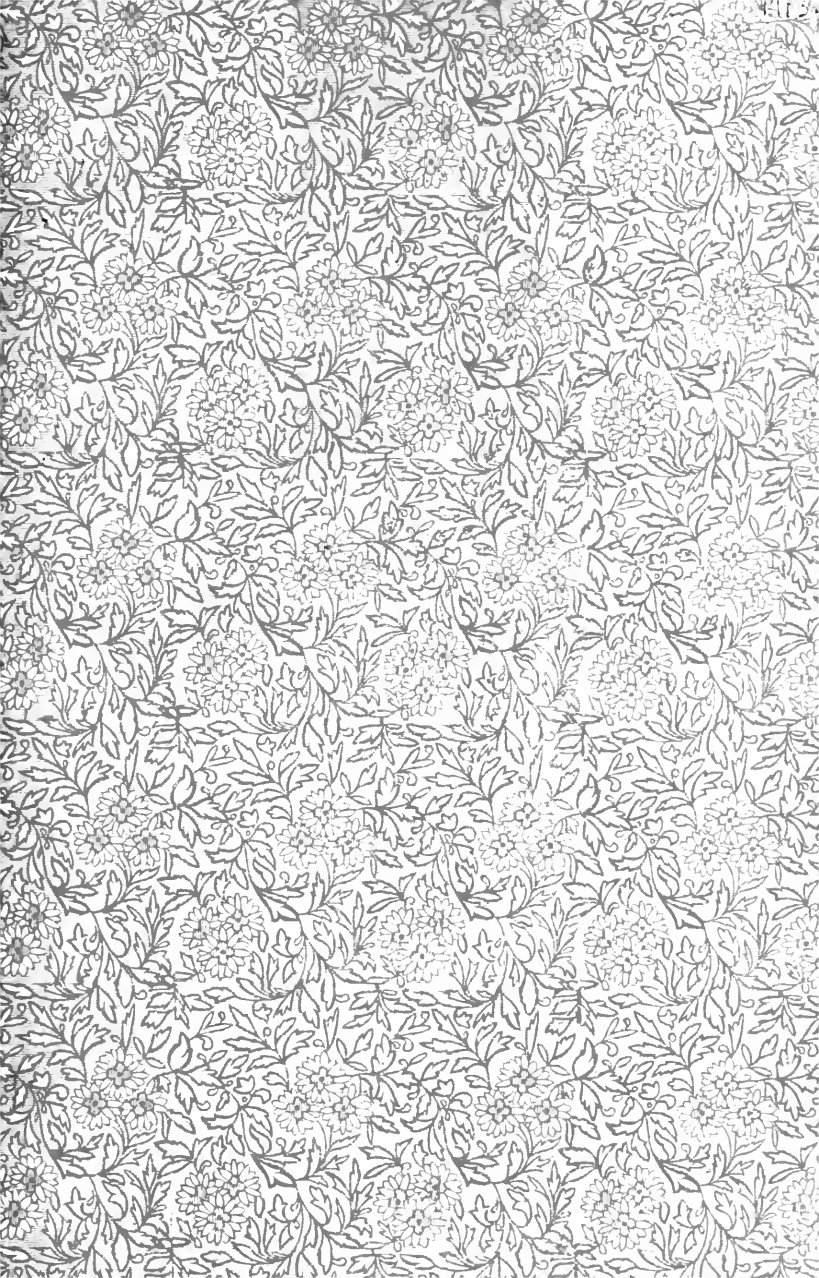


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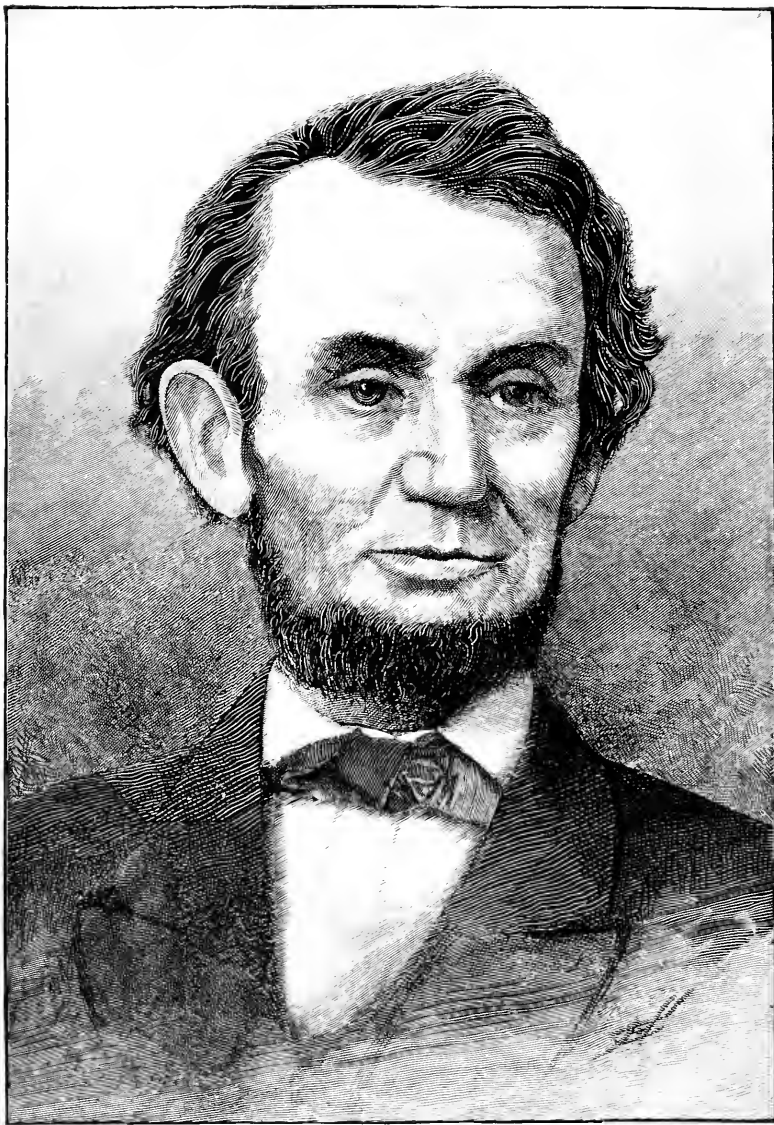






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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

# THE LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

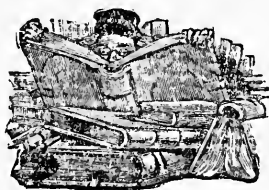
AND

ANDREW JOHNSON

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

*Author of "George Washington," "John Adams and Thomas Jefferson,"  
"James Madison, James Monroe and John Quincy Adams," "Andrew  
Jackson and Martin Van Buren," "Harrison, Tyler and  
Polk," "Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce and Buchanan,"  
"Ulysses S. Grant," "Grover Cleveland," etc.*



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

SIXTEENTH PRESIDENT.

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BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

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CHAPTER I.

*From Virginia to Kentucky—The Lincoln Family—  
Birth of Abraham Lincoln—Poor Lands and Poor  
Farming—Frontier Schoolmasters—Through the  
Woods and Across the Ohio—The New Log Cabin.*

THE people of the commonwealth of Virginia and their patriotic governor, Thomas Jefferson, did wonderfully well in the years 1779 and 1780, the darkest years, as some men declared, of the war for American independence. They gave all that they had to the great needs of the Continental Army under Washington and for the support of the Virginia troops under Clarke and other leaders, who were driving back the savages from the Western frontier. So completely was the latter work performed that the checked tide of westward emigration began to flow again, and before the close of 1780 a considerable number of hardy pioneers, some

with families and some without, had left the Old Dominion to begin life anew in the Ohio River country. One family that crossed the mountains into the backwoods of Kentucky consisted of a farmer named Abraham Lincoln, with his wife and five children. Their home had been in Rockingham County, to which a previous generation of Lincolns had removed, according to tradition, from among the Quakers of Berks County, Pa.

Mr. Lincoln had been a land owner in Virginia, and had now purchased four hundred acres of government land in Jefferson County, Ky., in a neighborhood which was still very likely to be infested, from time to time, by roving warriors and war parties of the Shawnees and other hostile red men. Work began at once, a log cabin was built, a clearing was made, and there seemed a prospect that the Lincoln family, like many another of those then pushing into the wilderness, was on its way to competence. Year after year went by, and there were terrible blows struck by the Indians, from time to time, along the spreading line of settlements. Their strength had not yet been broken, and they grew even more bitterly hostile as they saw their hunting grounds swept from them by the white man's axe and plough. The men who made the clearings were as soldiers of civilization, holding a sort of skirmish line, upon which many of them were sure to fall. Abraham Lincoln's hour came to him in the year 1786. He was at work only a few rods from his own door, and his youngest boy, Thomas, was with him. The older boys, Mordecai and Josiah, were

at work by themselves at a little distance. The nearest cover for a creeping enemy was equally near, but there was no thought of danger, and the toilers were all unarmed. The boys heard a rifle shot and saw their father fall dead. They met the sudden and terrible emergency with courage, but the budding prosperity of the Lincoln family had been withered away.

Josiah started at once upon a daring errand through the woods to Hughes' Station, the nearest military post, for assistance. Little Thomas, only seven years old, remained in childish fright by the body of his murdered father. Mordecai, the oldest son, reached the house and obtained a rifle while the ambushed Indian was recharging his own before venturing out to secure the coveted scalp trophy. The next shot came from the house, and was aimed at something white upon the breast of the warrior, just as he laid his hands upon little Thomas. It was well directed, and the savage fell dead beside his victim. Other Indians showed themselves, and were skirmished with by Mordecai until Josiah returned with a party of riflemen, but no more were killed. The young marksman himself became a revengeful hunter of Indians, destroying them relentlessly as wild beasts, whenever an opportunity offered.

The Jefferson County home was given up for one of greater security, in Washington County. The widow did her best for her three sons and her two daughters, but she could not supply the place of their father, and they grew up without the educational and other advantages which might otherwise

have been assured to them. Schools and books were scarce commodities in the backwoods. They were a species of luxury to be enjoyed only by people whose circumstances were exceptionally good. Twenty years later Thomas Lincoln, then about twenty-seven years of age, utterly untaught, was unable to so much as write his own name. In that year, 1806, nevertheless, he was married, on June 12th, to Miss Nancy Hanks, of Beechland, Washington County, Ky. He had been a farm laborer, a hunter, a restless and unsteady but by no means a dissipated character, and at last he had become something of a carpenter. He found his wife while working at what he knew of this trade in the shop of her uncle, Joseph Hanks, in Elizabethtown. After his marriage he attempted to gain a living by working at it, while his young and handsome wife undertook to teach him writing, but both attempts ended in failure. Thomas became able to write his own name and no more, and he gave up carpentering after little more than a year of haphazard effort.

The house they lived in at Elizabethtown was a very small and comfortless log cabin, and here, during the first year of wedded life, was born a daughter, who was named Nancy Lincoln, after her mother. Both in personal attractions and in mental capacity Mrs. Lincoln was a woman fitted for a better home than any that her husband was likely to ever give her. He made an effort early in the following year, for he purchased and proposed to pay for a small farm on the Big South Fork of Nolin Creek, about thirteen miles from Elizabethtown and three



miles from Hodgenville, in what is now La Rue County. This was part of what was then known as Hardin County, and contained an abundance of good land, but there were reasons why the Rock Spring Farm, as it was called, was obtained by Thomas Lincoln at a low price and on easy terms. All of it that was cleared for cultivation was wretched soil, from which a more industrious man than its new owner would have had difficulty in wringing a paying crop. The house was in keeping with the land—a low built log cabin of the poorest sort. A humbler, more unpromising homestead could hardly have been found, even in the backwoods of Kentucky. Here, on February 12th, 1809, was born ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and here were spent the first four years of his childhood.

The second effort of Thomas Lincoln to obtain a home and a farm was made under what seemed more hopeful circumstances. He purchased, on credit, of course, a very good piece of land, well timbered, of two hundred and thirty-eight acres, situated upon Knob Creek, about six miles from Hodgenville. It was near the junction of the creek with Rolling Fork, a tributary of Salt River. The fact that the latter stream runs into the Ohio had much to do with the manner of Thomas Lincoln's next attempt to better himself. A few acres of land near the cabin were put under cultivation during the first season, but by the end of the year two hundred acres had passed to a new owner. Much might have been done with the remainder by a capable farmer, but hardly anything was attempt-

ed, and the title to this also was shortly parted with. About three years in all were spent by the Lincoln family upon the Knob Creek farm, and it may be that more of the meagre support provided came from odd jobs of rude carpenter work than from any crops that were produced. There was no wonder that Mrs. Lincoln lost her comeliness and became bent and careworn and sad-faced through the long drudgery and privation which came to her in cabin after cabin. It is said that at last her features took upon them an expression of habitual melancholy, which was reproduced in those of her son. As for him, his childhood was peculiarly lacking in all that might be supposed to brighten the Summers or soften the Winters of even a poor settler's boy. His home was comfortless—almost destitute of furniture, ill-lighted, ill-warmed, and scantily provided with the barest necessities of life. There had been no near neighbors on Nolin's Fork, but he had had at least one playfellow there, an older boy named Duncan, with whom he hunted for woodchucks. On Knob Creek he had at first a playfellow named Gallaher and afterward his cousin, Dennis Hanks. The latter was full of life and fun, and was fond of taking Abe off on fishing excursions along the bank of the creek.

Mrs. Lincoln herself possessed the accomplishments of reading and writing, not very common in that day among the poorer people of Kentucky, and was able to give her children more or less instruction at home. A small glimpse of school life also came to them. The frontier schoolmasters were a migratory tribe, rarely remaining long in one place,

but teaching a little while in one mere hut of a schoolhouse and then a little while in another as rude. Very few of them were fitted to impart more than the smallest beginnings of book knowledge. One of them, named Zachariah Riney, taught for a season at no great distance from Thomas Lincoln's house, and another, Caleb Hazel, afterward opened a school upon the "Friend farm," four miles away. To each in succession Nancy and Abraham were sent, and it was afterward found that they had managed to pick up something. Whatever may have been true of the sister, however, no small seed of knowledge or thought could fall into such a mind as that of the brother without taking root and bearing fruit in due season.

Abraham Lincoln was seven years old when his father determined to give up trying to win a home and farm in Kentucky. There were reasons for believing that a better opening might be found north of the Ohio, among the unclaimed lands of what was still the Indiana Territory. In the Autumn of the year 1816 Thomas Lincoln constructed for himself a clumsy sort of river craft, described by some as a raft and by others as a kind of scow. He launched it upon the Rolling Fork, about half a mile from his house, and prepared for a voyage to Indiana. His cargo consisted mainly of about four hundred gallons of whiskey, intended for trading purposes. To this he added his kit of carpenter's tools. He knew how to manage a boat, for he had been a flatboatman, and had even made the long trip to New Orleans; but he now met with ship-

wreck after getting out of Salt River into the Ohio. His boat was upset and his cargo went to the bottom, but not in deep water. The tools and most of the whiskey were recovered after the boat was righted, and all were at last landed in safety at a place called Thompson's Ferry, in Perry County, Ind. They were deposited with a settler named Posey, and Lincoln pushed on into the woods to find a farm. He went only about sixteen miles from the river bank before finding a spot which suited him, a piece of the primeval forest in which the axe of no other woodsman had ever been heard. He returned to the ferry, crossed the river and walked back to Knob Creek to report to his wife and children. There had been one other child some years before, but he had lived only three days.

No wagon was required to transport all that remained of household goods. Two horses were sufficient for the beds and bedding, the few cooking utensils, and whatever else there might be. The animals are understood to have been borrowed from Mr. Krume, who had married Thomas Lincoln's sister and lived in Breckinridge County. Perhaps there was yet spare room enough upon one of them, after his packs were adjusted to his back, to add now and then a foot-weary woman or a child. At all events, the journey through the woods in the pleasant autumnal weather was safely accomplished, and the Ohio was once more crossed at Thompson's Ferry. Here it was necessary to hire a wagon from Mr. Posey, and then the hard part of the new undertaking began. Wind as he might, there were

trees at intervals directly in the way of Thomas Lincoln's team, and these had to come down. He cut his own road, mile after mile, and at last was once more upon the land which he had marked as his own.

It was an attractive spot, a gentle knoll surrounded by open forest ; the soil was good, producing excellent natural grass and promising rich harvests in the days to come. There was no water near, and even such wells as Thomas Lincoln was afterward able to dig failed to find any. The only resource was the rain water collected in the shaded pools, and this at times required patient filtering. Its character also probably accounted for some of the sicknesses which subsequently afflicted the Southern Indiana settlers.

The Lincoln farm was situated between Big Pigeon Creek and Little Pigeon Creek, not far from their junction, and it had no near neighbor clearings in the Autumn of 1816. The village of Gentryville, three and a half miles away, sprang up afterward. The game, of several kinds, was abundant, and a deer could be had at any time by a little watching at one of the salt deer licks near at hand. There was an assurance of fresh meat at least, but the first and most important consideration was that of protection from the Winter storms which were soon to come. There was no time for the construction of an elaborate and perfect log cabin. The best that could be done was to make what some called a "pole shelter" and others a "half-faced camp," a sort of slab-roofed shed, log-walled on three sides

and open on the fourth. It was about fourteen feet square, and its floor was the bare earth. It would have answered well enough for a party of hardy hunters, but it was a poor place for Nancy Lincoln and her little girl and boy to pass a Winter in. The season was not exceptionally severe, and Thomas had a patch of his new farm cleared before Spring came. He was ready to plant some corn and vegetables, and when that was done he turned his attention once more to house building. He was in no hurry about it, for the pole shelter was not so bad a camp in Summer weather. The new shelter was about forty yards distant from the old. It was a one-room cabin, built of unhewn logs. There was a place for a door and another for a window, just as there was for a floor, but neither the one nor the other was put in. The holes in the wall and the pounded earth satisfied Thomas Lincoln's moderate ambition for a while. He constructed a bedstead of small posts driven into the earth, with cross-pieces. He made a table and some seats. There was a mud chimney and a fireplace. The loft above could be reached by climbing, for he had driven pegs into the logs for that purpose, so that Abe or Nancy or both could sleep up there. It was a vast improvement upon the pole shelter, and the Lincoln family took possession of it in the Autumn of the year 1817. They were landholders, farmers, living in their own house. They had already raised one crop, such as it was, and it looked as if more were sure to come. They had made an important advance in life.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Sparrow Family—Sickness and Death of Mrs. Lincoln—How a New Life Began—Schooldays and Schoolmasters in the Backwoods.*

MRS. LINCOLN'S Aunt Betsy married Thomas Sparrow. They had no children of their own, and so had adopted their nephew, Dennis Hanks. Nancy's own home had at one time been with them, and they had been her near neighbors in Kentucky after her marriage to Thomas Lincoln. They had not prospered, and in the fall of the year 1817 they accepted an invitation to join their relatives in the new undertaking in Indiana. They arrived just after the pole shelter was left vacant, and they at once took possession of it. The older members of both families were doubtless help and company for each other, but all that they gained was as nothing to what came to little Abe and his sister Nancy in having Dennis Hanks with them in all the fun the woods afforded. He was, moreover, just the boy to make the most of whatever fun-making material there might be. Before his coming there had been no playmates, for the half dozen or more of cabins scattered at long intervals up and down the Big and Little Pigeon creeks were all too far away.

Indiana Territory was admitted into the Union as

a sovereign State in the year 1816, and a tide of immigration was setting in. One great result of the War of 1812 had been to settle the Indian question, so far as all that region was concerned, and the frontiersmen were no longer in any fear of savage forays. Their cabins became secure when Tecumseh fell at the battle of the Thames. The wild tribes were still powerful, but their war spirit was broken. They were not to again undertake widely extended hostilities until after yet another State should have time to form west of Indiana; until after another great chief should arise resembling Tecumseh, and until the little barefoot boy at play in the woods near Little Pigeon Creek should be old enough to command a company of riflemen.

On October 15th, 1817, Thomas Lincoln, under the credit system then existing, made a formal entry of his claim to the quarter section, one hundred and sixty acres, of government land upon which he had settled. About ten years later, June 6th, 1827, he relinquished to the Government his claim to one half of the land, completed his payment upon the other half, and received an actual patent for eighty acres around his house. During all the intervening time occupation free of rent or other molestation had been entirely secure.

The first half of the year following the arrival of the Sparrow family passed quietly. More trees came down, another crop was raised, and there was something like rude comfort and plenty in the two cabins. For Thomas and Nancy Lincoln it was a decided improvement over anything they had known



in Kentucky since their wedding day. With the midsummer heats, however, a great darkness began to cloud over the scattered settlements of Southern Indiana. The strange disorder known in the Western country as the "milk sick" swept through as an epidemic scourge. Whatever may have been its nature, malarial or otherwise, its effects were equally destructive upon cattle and human beings. Suffering and death came to almost every cabin. It was a lingering fever, assailing the stomach so directly as to give rise to peculiar theories as to its origin in some sort of mineral poison finding its way into water, grasses, and milk.

Thomas and Betsy Sparrow came down with the "milk sick," and then Mrs. Lincoln was taken. The former were removed from the pole shelter to the cabin for better care, but there was little enough that could be done. The nearest physician was twenty miles away, and could not be reached, and all the frontier doctors had confessed that this mysterious pestilence baffled them. There were long weeks of watching, as the sufferers grew slowly weaker. The end came with the first week of October. Thomas and Betsy Sparrow died first, and then, on the 5th, Mrs. Lincoln.

Rude coffins were constructed by Thomas Lincoln out of boards which he had whip-sawed all alone from the trees he had felled. Graves were dug for each in succession upon a knoll about half a mile southeast of the house. The dead were buried with such help as could be had, and some months later a funeral sermon was preached by an itinerant preacher

named David Elkin. Little Abraham is said to have been instrumental in obtaining this last tribute of respect for the memory of his mother. No stone marked the spot for many long years, but one was erected in 1879. It bears the inscription :

NANCY HANKS LINCOLN,

MOTHER OF

*PRESIDENT LINCOLN.*

DIED OCTOBER 5, 1818. AGED 35 YEARS.

---

*Erected by a Friend of her Martyred Son, 1879.*

The grave is surrounded by a neat iron fence.

The Winter of 1818-19 was a lonely and dreary time in the Lincoln cabin. Whenever their father was absent on any protracted errand, of business or of work or of the hunting upon which so large a part of their supplies depended, the children and Dennis Hanks were left to take care of themselves. Perhaps the sad look in the boy's face deepened somewhat through those chilling, gloomy, uncared-for days and months. It was not quite so bad after warm weather came again, so that shoeless children could ramble through the woods without getting frostbitten. Spring and Summer passed, and Thomas Lincoln himself began to dread more and more another Winter in a wifeless home. Years and years ago, before his courtship of Nancy Hanks, he had proposed matrimony to Sally Bush, of Elizabethtown, Ky., and had been rejected. She was a

youngwoman of much respectability, and had shortly afterward made a better match with a man named Johnston. She had now for some time been a widow with three children, a boy and two girls; she was poor, but she had continued to maintain an exceptionally high character. Late in the Autumn of the year 1819 Thomas Lincoln came to Elizabethtown and to the home of Mrs. Sally Bush Johnston. He asked her to marry him and to come and take charge of his new house and farm in Indiana. He seems to have described his improved condition flatteringly, and it is said that his family connections added their influence to his entreaties. At all events, she consented and prepared for the wedding and the journey. A wagon drawn by four horses, all borrowed of Ralph Krume, Thomas Lincoln's brother-in-law, was required to convey the extraordinary wealth of household goods belonging to the new Mrs. Lincoln. She even possessed one extravagant bureau, the original cost of which had been forty dollars, and it was likely to cut a remarkable figure in the kind of palace it was now going to. A large chest of clothing, cooking utensils, table furniture, and other goods to that time unknown to the Lincoln family housekeeping made up the inventory. Mr. Krume himself acted as coachman of the bridal party, and it safely reached its destination in December.

It was very much as if an unimagined Christmas present had been brought to little Abe Lincoln, to his sister, and to Dennis Hanks. They were shoeless and stockingless in the Winter weather, and

such clothing as they had was a reminder that they had been more than a year without a mother.

Their condition was a strong appeal to the kind heart of Mrs. Lincoln upon her arrival. It helped her in the effort she was compelled to make to subdue the just indignation which stirred her when what she found was compared with what she had been led to expect. She was a Christian woman, actuated by a high sense of duty, and she at once adopted the forlorn little pioneers as her own. They were washed, combed, clad warmly, fed well, and provided with comfortable beds. The log cabin itself underwent a transformation, for Thomas Lincoln was no longer permitted to have his own indolent way. He was compelled to put down a solid wooden floor, to put glazed sashes in the windows, and a door in the place for it. The new furniture itself changed the entire appearance of things. The house was somewhat crowded with so many children, but it was neither cold nor lonely during the remainder of that Winter.

Not even such a wife could make a prosperous man out of Thomas Lincoln, but he was forced to do better than ever he had before. He was even led, in 1823, to join the Baptist Church, to which his wife belonged, and he was a more respectable man to the day of his death.

Mrs. Lincoln's best work was with and for her children. She at once began to inquire how much or how little they already knew, and she was surprised with the uncommon tokens of brightness exhibited by her stepson. Abe responded to her with

a boyish affection as strong as any he could ever have had for his own mother. She had brought a new life to him, as if she had opened a sort of new world, the kind of world best known as "home." In her old age, after he had grown to manhood, had risen to greatness, and had passed away, she said of him: "I can say what scarcely one woman, a mother, can say in a thousand. Abe never gave me a cross word or look and never refused, in fact or appearance, to do anything I requested of him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. . . . His mind and mine, what little I had, seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President"—tears interrupted her there, but she soon added: "He was dutiful to me always. I think he loved me truly. I had a son John who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys; but I must say, both now being dead, that Abe was the best boy I ever saw or expect to see."

He might well be warmly grateful to such a woman.

Many settlers had found their way into the Pigeon Creek woods since Thomas Lincoln cut down his first trees. A beginning of a village was made about this time at what became Gentryville. There were other families with growing children, and, as a matter of course, the schoolmaster discovered the new field which had thus been opened. A meeting-house had been erected upon the bank of Little Pigeon Creek, a mile and a half from the Lincoln cabin. Near this was put up what might have been called a pen for learners. It was built of unhewn logs and

had holes cut through these for windows. No glass ever went into the holes, but sometimes the wind and most of the light were kept out by sheets of greased paper. It was a pen made for children, but a man of ordinary size could stand erect and his head would hardly touch the ceiling.

The first teacher to come after Mrs. Lincoln decided that something must be done for Abe's education was a man named Hazel Dorsey, who was able to give instruction in reading and writing and in arithmetic as far upward as "the rule of three." Beyond that neither he nor his pupils had any immediate need for going. One of the strong points of the school while in his hands was the spelling class, and in this Abe at once began to distinguish himself.

Winter was schooltime in the backwoods, for any schoolmaster could find more profitable employment at other seasons, and so could many of his possible pupils. There were Winters, however, when no teacher came. Hazel Dorsey is supposed to have taught in the Winter of 1818-19, and his successor, Andrew Crawford, did not take charge of the Little Pigeon Creek schoolhouse until the Winter of 1822-23. His instructions were about the same as those of Dorsey, with one peculiar and important addition. The young settlers were greatly in need of "manners," and Mr. Crawford proposed a reformation. He taught them the arts of bowing gracefully, of getting up and sitting down well, of entering and leaving rooms with propriety, and many other kindred accomplishments. Under him also

Abraham Lincoln made his mark as the best speller in all the Little Pigeon Creek neighborhood. After Mr. Crawford had finished his brief term and had departed, there was another long interval before further teaching could be obtained. Even then, in the Winter of 1826, the school opened by a Mr. Swaney was four and a half miles distant, and mere going and coming was a serious undertaking in anything but favorable weather. The branches taught were no higher, and young Lincoln's attendance was intermittent and was soon ended altogether. Counting up his actual school days in after years, he computed them all, in Kentucky and Indiana, at about one year's time, but then neither Riney, Hazel Dorsey, Crawford, nor Swaney had been the teacher of the school at which he had actually been toilsomely attending during all those years. He had learned from them many things—no doubt, all they were capable of teaching him ; but without their help or that of any other human being, save his intelligent and helpful stepmother, he had acquired incomparably more.

### CHAPTER III.

*Backwoodsmen and their Ways—Abraham Lincoln's Boyhood—Fireside Studies—Work and Fun—Books—Early Essays—Hiring Out—Beginning the Study of Law—A Very Tall Boy.*

THE childhood of Abraham Lincoln was cramped, narrow, and dark, but his boy days began with something better. When his stepmother arrived he was in his eleventh year, and was already tall for his age. He grew rapidly after that, and was more than six feet in height before he reached his eighteenth birthday. He was slender and was anything but good-looking, but his strength was more than in proportion to his size, and was enough of itself to make him a marked boy in such a community. The Lincoln family was apparently as well off as were others around them, and it was not yet time for social distinctions to make their appearance in the backwoods. There was no wealth to speak of, and personal character was everything. Thomas Lincoln himself was a man of more than ordinary muscle, and this, with the fact that he was the only man in the settlement who owned a kit of tools and knew how to use them, made him of some importance. As for the extreme simplicity of log-cabin life, what might seem its privations were hardly felt at all by people who had been born and brought up



to it. As for the children, younger and older, they were dimly aware that there were elsewhere larger settlements, where the people lived in houses made of boards and even of brick or stone. Envy and covetousness were not prevalent vices, however, and it was a severe reproach to be called proud or extravagant. Cloth was so scarce that it was by no means easy to be particular in matters of dress. A boy like Abe Lincoln, for instance, could not expect enough of even homespun for a full suit of clothing. There was no need of a coat or vest over his jean shirt, except in pretty cold weather. Deer-skin was the regulation material for trousers, not only because the deer could be had for the killing and the leather dressed at home, but because such garments were extremely durable. They were altogether too much so, since the most careful tanning could not prevent them from shrinking, while Abraham Lincoln was all the while expanding. Buckskins which hung loosely at his instep when first put on clung tightly half way to his knees long before he had a right to expect another pair.

Each family manufactured its own shoes or traded for them with some more skilful neighbor. They were strictly a Winter luxury, except on special occasions. When worn at other seasons, to meeting or to a merry making, they could be carried by hand through the woodland paths and put on, with or without stockings, on getting near to the destination. They were often accounted too costly, if not too trying to unaccustomed feet, for young pioneers to dance in them. Everybody was supposed to be

honest, and no door required a lock. There were no taverns, but hospitality was universal, and the humblest wayfarer was sure of a welcome under any roof near which mealtime or night might find him. Payment was not often expected, except in the form of every item of news and information concerning himself, or anything else in creation, which the random guest might be able to supply. Now and then a newspaper found its way in among the trees, and passed from hand to hand until worn out, the older people who could not read calling to their aid some more learned neighbor or some youngster like Abe Lincoln, who was receiving the educational advantages which had not been so liberally provided for the previous generation. There was much respect for religion in its ruder forms, and the children of Mrs. Lincoln at least were brought up to read the Bible. The whole community teemed with queer, old-fashioned superstitions, as well as with endless tales of the doings of frontier heroes, red and white. A really good yarn spinner was sure of popularity around the blazing fireplaces of homes which knew little about candlelight or of evening reading.

As Abraham Lincoln went on into his teens, he became more and more a welcome guest in every cabin and at all gatherings of the young people. He was full of rude, mischievous fun, and there was no end to the stories he could tell. In one point his mischief differed from that of many other of the young semi-barbarians around him, for he could not be cruel and call it fun. He came out strongly, for instance, against the stupid experiment of putting

hot coals upon the backs of terrapins to make them put out their heads and walk.

There was a family Bible in the Lincoln cabin now, but there were other books scattered up and down the Big and Little Pigeon. Some families had as many as two, or even three, and wherever he heard of any such thing Abe was sure to be a visitor at an early day. He read everything that he could lay his hands upon, but there were some wonderful volumes which he read and read again until they gave up to him all the mental training they had in them. His favorites included a "History of the United States," Weems's "Life of Washington," "Robinson Crusoe," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and Æsop's "Fables."

Love of literature sometimes interfered with work, and oftener still it took him away from the boy-and-girl society of his own and other homes. He was fond of lying under a tree with his book in pleasant weather, or by the fireside at other times. As the successive volumes were nearly all borrowed, he formed a habit of copying into a scrap-book the passages which struck his fancy. The first copy was often made upon a board or shingle, and afterward transferred more carefully with pen and paper. Arithmetic received a due share of his attention, and so more and more as time went on did original composition. The extreme scarcity of stationery compelled close economy in its use, but a bit of charcoal and a board, smoothly shaven with his father's drawing-knife, served excellently well. The great wooden fire-shovel was filled up and shaven

clean many a time. There was one important work which it was impossible for him to borrow, and he was obliged to make frequent visits to the house of David Turnham, acting town constable, in order to devour the Revised Statutes of Indiana. The fact that he could and did take a deep interest in such a book, reading it through and through, was a remarkable indication of the kind and quality of mind which was waiting within him for further development.

Increasing bodily size and strength brought with them early demands for their employment. The boy who could chop more wood and pitch more hay and do more of any heavy work than could any other boy in the neighborhood was hired out by his father as a matter of course. He worked from house to house, remaining through days or weeks or even months, as need might be, everywhere liked and trusted and treated as altogether the equal of his employers. The work was often hard, but there was no loss of social position in doing it. The settlers were of many kinds, from several of the older States, and there were a few from foreign lands. A young fellow who had an almost intuitive capacity for reading human character was sure to learn much in living around among them. Such printed books as they might possess were also sure of a careful perusal. He had a peculiarly retentive memory, and was able to recall with rare exactness whatever he had read or heard. He was fond of repeating favorite passages of prose or verse, in his own or any other home circle, and his reproductions now and then, on Mondays, included the sermon of Sun-

day, with a grotesque imitation of the preacher's voice and manner. He had but little reverence, and there are stories of home sermons preached by him when a boy to the other children, from behind a table in the corner of the cabin, while the older people were attending services at the meeting-house. These first efforts in oratory were after a while followed by others of a different sort, and he was apt to make an audience of the hands in any harvest field. There was sure to be fun in whatever he undertook to say, and boys and men were only too willing to drop hard work and listen.

Efforts at original composition took many forms in the hands of the only Pigeon Creek boy who was really obtaining an education. Neighborhood chronicles, traditions, and anecdotes were reduced to written form. Then came rude jingles of doggerel verses, and there were sometimes coarse satires of acquaintances, old as well as young. So keen and unsparing were some of these, that their boy author would have suffered severely at the hands of his victims but for his very good muscular capacity for self-defence. He was by no means quarrelsome and was something of a peacemaker, but he was not at all a non-resistant. Rough-and-tumble fist fights were hardly considered beneath any man's dignity, although weapons were rarely used. From one pernicious agent of disorder young Lincoln kept himself thoughtfully free. In a community where whiskey-drinking was the rule and occasional intoxication but mildly condemned by public opinion, he resolutely refused to touch ardent spirits. The

object lessons of wreck and ruin around him were ample teachers. Among them was one helpless drunkard whom he found in the road on a bitter night, picked up in his strong arms, saved from freezing to death, and carried home. No vice of any sort was permitted to sap the increasing strength of his mind and body, and he became the acknowledged best man of the settlement in all manly exercises, such as running, wrestling, jumping, lifting, throwing the heavy hammer, as well as in the more practical uses of the woodman's axe. The one frontier accomplishment in which he never excelled was that of hunting. He was not fond of it as sport, and he could shoot only fairly well with a rifle.

Abe was at home now only when out of work, and it was just as well, for the Lincoln cabin was over full, loft and all. Besides, Thomas Lincoln was all the while willing that his tall son, who had refused all urging to learn the carpenter's trade, should earn something toward providing the increasing needs of the rest of the family. For the sake of his beloved stepmother Abe was willing to do almost anything, but as time went on he found the business of toiling for everybody's benefit but his own becoming more and more irksome. He was not exactly fettered, for he had a great deal of time to himself, owing even to the scarcity of cash-paying employers, but his first idea of launching out into the world and going upon the river as a boatman was nipped in the bud by the reminder that his father was still entitled legally to his labor and his wages. He was not fond of bodily toil for its own sake, and was disposed to

undertake no more than was needful until an opportunity should come for the different work for which he was steadily preparing himself. How well he had advanced in one direction was proved by the fact that an essay of his upon temperance and another upon popular education, sent by friends to the editors of newspapers at a distance, were promptly printed and received strong commendation.

The village of Gentryville, named from its founder, had now attained a fair degree of prosperity and was the centre of trade for a pretty large district. It was the place for unemployed men and boys to stroll in and spend their idle time, and for farmers and their families to linger in and gossip after trading at Mr. Gentry's store. It was but a moderate walk from the Lincoln farm, and became a favorite resort for young Lincoln. Books could be borrowed there, news could be heard, and now and then there were "debating matches," in which the budding orator is said to have distinguished himself. Fifteen miles away was Booneville, the county seat of Warrick County, and whenever court was in session Abe was sure to steal enough of time from any other occupation and go over to attend the trials of civil and criminal cases. He was by no means singular in that, since any important criminal or any really great property dispute, such, for instance, as the ownership of a horse, was sure to summon an audience from far and near. There were differences among the listeners, however, and while others laid in stores of materials for home and neighborhood gossip, the youth from Pigeon Creek heard the state-

ments of witnesses, the arguments of lawyers, the charges of judges, and the verdicts of juries, as a profoundly interested law student, adding more than he was yet aware of to the curious learning he had already acquired from the Revised Statutes of Indiana.



## CHAPTER IV.

*A Young Flatboatman—A Night Fight—Family Changes—Migrating to Illinois—Historic Rails—Of Age and Frce—A Day Laborer—Boat Building—Rutledge's Dam—Down the Mississippi—Object Lessons on Slavery.*

THE time for seeing something more of the country he lived in came to Abraham Lincoln at last. Early in March, 1828, he went to work for Mr. Gentry, of Gentryville. Trade had prospered, and a flatboat cargo of Indiana produce was getting ready for a trip down the river to a market, under the direction of Mr. Gentry's son, Allen. Abe had won a reputation for sobriety and trustworthiness as well as for industry and strength, and he was chosen as crew of the craft which his friend Allen was to command. The voyage was a complete success. Some sales were made at river landings by the way, and what remained, the boat included, found purchasers at New Orleans. The steering a flatboat down the swift currents of the Ohio and Mississippi is watchful but not difficult work. The low banks upon either hand offer little that is worth studying, and there are few excitements attending such a trip. Only one is recorded as occurring to the Gentryville captain and his crew. It came by night, while the

boat was tied up at the Duchesne plantation, below Baton Rouge. A gang of negro thieves came on board for plunder, and a severe fight followed, but the two young boatmen won the victory and chased their badly clubbed assailants quite a distance from the boat. Gentry received no special damage in the affray, but Lincoln was bleeding from more than one severe hurt, and his conduct and prowess added greatly to his reputation when the story was told at home. The return passage was made by steamer, after Lincoln had taken his first look at a city. Until then he had seen nothing larger than Gentryville, and there were many things in New Orleans peculiarly well worth studying. The entire experience, lasting about three months, was a sort of separation from pioneer boy life and a beginning of young manhood.

Several important changes had already occurred in the Lincoln family circle, and more were speedily to come. John Hanks, a cousin, had come from Kentucky to live with them, and proved himself a steady, hard-working sort of man. Levi Hall and his wife Nancy, aunt of the first Mrs. Lincoln and mother of Dennis Hanks, also came, with their children, about eight years after the Lincoln family settled in Indiana. Levi and his wife died of the "milk sick," but their son Levi married one of the Johnston girls, daughters of Mrs. Sally Lincoln, and Dennis Hanks married the other. Abraham Lincoln's own sister Nancy dropped that name after her stepmother's arrival, and was called Sally. She married in her eighteenth year a neighbor named

Aaron Grigsby, but before the anniversary of her wedding day came she had passed away.

The next important change was mainly due to the enterprise of John Hanks. In the Autumn of 1828 he emigrated to Illinois and settled in Macon County. He was a man in whose opinion upon farming matters his relatives had considerable confidence, and he sent back glowing accounts of the superior advantages and prospects of settlers in the Prairie State. He even made one trip all the way back to the bank of Little Pigeon Creek to tell them how much better they might do if they would. Thomas Lincoln's affairs were not altogether in bad condition. He had at last obtained a title to eighty acres of his original entry, but only a part of it was even yet under cultivation. Perhaps the strongest argument in favor of the proposed removal to Illinois was the extreme unhealthiness of that part of Indiana at the time. Malarial fevers, especially the "milk sick," were making ravages which were as warnings to get away, and the process of preparation began.

Time was required for the disposal of land and stock, and the year 1830 arrived before all was ready. A large wagon, drawn by four yoke of oxen, was heavily laden with household goods. It could carry also the female members of the family when occasion required. The journey was made in February, over muddy roads and across sloughs and streams swollen by thaws and rain. Two weeks were consumed in weary fights with the difficulties encountered by the way, but on March 1st, 1830,

the ox-team halted at the house of John Hanks, near Decatur. With it were Thomas Lincoln and his wife Sally, her son, John Johnston, her daughters, Mrs. Levi Hall and Mrs. Dennis Hanks, their husbands and children, and Abraham Lincoln. A warm welcome awaited them, with the information that a good spot for their new home had already been picked out for them on the bank of the north fork of the Sangamon River, and that logs enough for a house were there in readiness by the liberal forethought of John Hanks.

On February 12th, 1830, just before setting out for Illinois, Abraham Lincoln became of age. From that day forward his work and his wages were his own, and he entered the new State a free man. His first use of his freedom was in helping the family migration. His next was in the construction of the log-house home on the Sangamon. After that was done, he and Dennis Hanks ploughed about fifteen acres of land and split, in the adjacent timber, a sufficient number of walnut rails to fence it in. Two of those rails became suddenly famous, about thirty years later, for from them was derived the political campaign title of the great Illinois Rail Splitter.

With the completion of that rail fence, the relations of Abraham Lincoln and his father's family, other than those of affection, were ended. He went out to fight the battle of life for himself unencumbered, but at the same time unaided. He had neither money, nor trade, nor tools, nor friends, and he was without, for a season, any fixed or definite aim and hope. The population of which he had

become a member was more varied in its elements than that of Southern Indiana, but much of it came from the same sources, and was as illiterate, as coarse, and as rude. The entire State contained one hundred and fifty-seven thousand four hundred and forty-seven inhabitants, scattered along the water-courses, and for the greater part making as yet but few settlements upon the exhaustless prairie soil which was one day to attract such a tide of immigration. The currents then beginning to slowly increase moved almost clannishly. People from the free States settled in the northern counties, while those from slaveholding communities sought the southern part of the vast, unoccupied area. The fact that the latter were debarred from bringing slaves with them was rendered of less importance by the other fact that those who came were largely of the Hanks and Lincoln class, and had none to bring. There was among them, however, an immense amount of undeveloped mental capacity, and their children accomplished enough to show what the parents might have been if opportunity had offered. During one whole generation, for some families, and two or even three generations for others, some of the best elements of the English-speaking races had been hidden among the glooms and poverties of the Western woods.

Except upon the extreme northwestern border of Illinois, all peril of further trouble with Indian tribes had passed away, and all the remaining foes of social order and rapid improvement were to be found among the very heterogeneous palefaces. Many of these were disposed to be anything but orderly,

and had small thought of any improvement which could not be measured by larger crops of corn, somewhat more easily raised, or of pork sold at better prices. There was greater wealth, better farming, and there were better roads, schools, churches, newspapers, and generally a higher state of civilization in the northern counties, whose people were accustomed to describe the southern third of the commonwealth as Egypt and to draw exaggerated pictures of its intellectual darkness.

The remainder of the year 1830 and most of the following Winter, called "the Winter of the deep snow," for its rare severity, was spent by Abraham Lincoln as an itinerant farm hand, working for whoever would give him temporary employment. John Hanks relates that during this period a man named Posey came into their neighborhood and made a political speech, the subject being the improvement of the Sangamon River for purposes of navigation. Hanks declared that Lincoln could beat the orator, and turned down an empty box as a platform. From this stand the response was given, and, says Hanks, "Abe beat him to death." After all was over, Mr. Posey proved his magnanimity by having a friendly talk with his young opponent, inquiring as to his education, and so forth, and encouraging him to further efforts toward self-improvement. No other encouragement came, but during the Winter Lincoln made the acquaintance and secured the entire confidence of a speculative trader named Denton Offutt, who had upon his hands at the time several business enterprises more or less

promising. One of these included a voyage down the river to New Orleans with a flatboat cargo of Illinois produce. He proposed to John Hanks that he and Lincoln should be the crew of that boat, both having some river experience, and they, after some demur on the part of Hanks, induced John Johnston to join them. The pay offered was high for those times, being fifty cents a day while at work and a bonus of twenty dollars each in case of a successful trip.

The bargain was made in February, 1831, and in March, when the hard Winter at last broke up, the three young men went down the Sangamon in a canoe to Judy's Ferry, five miles east of Springfield. They walked over to this place, where Offutt had appointed to meet them, and found him at a tavern, ready to tell them that he had failed to procure a flatboat and that they must build one. Ship builders now as well as sailors, they went about five miles northward to the mouth of Spring Creek, where the timber stood on "Congress land," never yet owned by any individual. In a fortnight they had enough trees cut for the proposed boat, in shape to raft down to Sangamontown, where there was a saw-mill. While chopping they had found a boarding place, a mile away from their work, but now they built a shanty and boarded themselves. The boat was well and strongly made, or it would not have survived its next, or rather its very first rough experience. Two full weeks were required to put it together, and when it was launched it was speedily freighted with salt pork, hogs, and corn. It floated

well with the current until it was helplessly swept upon Rutledge's mill dam at New Salem. The bow went up and the stern went down, water began to pour in, and it looked as if the voyage of Mr. Offutt's new craft had suddenly ended. The entire population of New Salem came out to see the shipwreck, while Abe Lincoln, the bow hand of the stranded boat, studied the unlooked-for problem in river navigation. He solved it by getting the cargo out of the stern to lighten that end, and by boring holes forward to let the water out as the stern arose and the bow went down. It was a feat which gained him more than a little applause, and made a fine beginning for the strong hold he was soon to win upon the good opinion of the people of New Salem and vicinity. All their admiration must have been bestowed upon the performance itself, for those who afterward described the appearance of the man who saved the boat declared that his outer man was uncommonly rough even for a Sangamon River bow hand. His shrunken trousers reached but a few inches below his knees, they were short at the waist also, and there were defects in his other garments. Decidedly the most enthusiastic observer was Mr. Offutt himself, as he was afterward ready to show. Perhaps it was this first, offhand invention which led, many years afterward, to another, more deliberately made but practically less profitable. This was "A. Lincoln's improved manner of buoying vessels" to lift them over river shoals, for which a patent was awarded him in 1849, and of which the model, whittled out by himself,



may still be seen in the Patent Office at Washington.

Below Rutledge's dam there were only the ordinary difficulties of river navigation to be encountered, and the trip to New Orleans was made quickly and safely. The bow hand of the flatboat had earned his wages and his bonus, and had accomplished more than he yet knew for his own immediate prospects. While in New Orleans he also accomplished something of vast importance for the future of his country, for he obtained vivid and indelible impressions concerning the nature of slavery and of the buying and selling of human beings. If he learned anything, or saw or felt anything with reference to the subject during his first trip with Allen Gentry, there is no record of it, but John Hanks is a trustworthy witness in this instance, and he says : "There it was we saw negroes chained, maltreated, whipped, and scourged. Lincoln saw it ; his heart bled ; said nothing much ; was silent from feeling, was sad, looked bad, felt bad, was thoughtful and abstracted. I can say, knowing it, that it was on this trip that he formed his opinions of slavery. It run its iron into him then and there, May, 1831. I have heard him say so, often and often."

Into these words of John Hanks may be condensed, in a manner, the substance of letters and utterances of Mr. Lincoln himself in after years, declaring that his convictions upon the subject of slavery came to him as the fruit of personal observation. Then and afterward he saw for himself, heard for himself, and was ready at any time for whatever act

or effort in behalf of freedom his sober reason might approve.

The trip having proved a success, the entire party took passage for the North in June. At St. Louis Mr. Offutt left his crew, and the three friends walked twenty-five miles across the country to Edwardsville, Ill. At this place they separated, Hanks taking the Springfield road, while Lincoln and Johnston trudged on together for a visit to the new home which Thomas Lincoln had recently found for himself in Coles County,

## CHAPTER V.

*A Wrestling Match—Piloting on the Sangamon—Clerk in a Country Store—Foreman of a Mill—The Clary's Grove Boys—English Grammar—Cooper-shop Studies—Out of Work—The Black Hawk War—Captain Lincoln.*

LINCOLN'S visit in Coles County continued until August, and the only incident of it on record is a wrestling match with one Daniel Needham, up to that hour an acknowledged champion, who believed that no other man could throw him. Needham was now defeated with such apparent ease that he lost his temper, and the match would have ended in a fight but for the good-humored bantering of the victor.

One of Mr. Offutt's business plans, already discussed with his bow hand, was the opening of a country store in New Salem. It was a business point rather than a village, for it did not contain more than a score of houses, all small, and its population was too drifting and uncertain for any trustworthy census. Rutledge's and Cameron's mill, at the dam upon which Lincoln had rescued Mr. Offutt's flatboat, had been built in 1829, when the bluff was bare prairie. The bluff, about a hundred feet in height, is there now, but the town has disappeared.

When Lincoln reached New Salem, in August, 1831, Mr. Offutt had not arrived. The required merchandise had been collected at Beardstown, and there were delays in its transportation. While Lincoln was waiting, idling around the very unattractive hamlet, a local election day arrived. Two clerks of election, both able to write, were required by law. One of the men who were to serve was sick when the day came, and his place was not easy to fill, for New Salem loafers were not generally educated men. Lincoln did not look like a man who could use a pen, but he was asked, in the hasty search for a scribe, and his answer obtained for him his first public employment, that of clerk of election during one entire day.

Still Mr. Offutt did not come, but other employment did. One Dr. Nelson, of New Salem, had determined to go to Texas, had prepared a flatboat, loaded it with his household goods and other effects, and was ready for his voyage. The Sangamon was swollen high with rain, and had spread widely beyond its accustomed Summer channel in all the low lands. A pilot of skill was needed, and Lincoln's reputation stood high. He was employed to take the boat down as far as Beardstown, and succeeded all the better because no channel existed and no piloting was needed. He floated across prairie, and was at times three miles from what would have been the Sangamon at low water. He gained both fame and wages, however, and shortly after his return to New Salem, Mr. Offutt and the stock of goods arrived. The storeroom and a remnant of a stock

belonging to an unsuccessful trader named Warburton had been transferred to Mr. Offutt, and Lincoln's first duty was to set things in order. He knew what to do, for he had acted as clerk and salesman for a season for Mr. Gentry, at Gentryville, Ind., and this was just such another establishment.

Business began, and Mr. Offutt was determined to drive it. He bought the mill, and proposed to run that in connection with the store. He was a man whose ideas were too much for him in many ways. He undertook too much and he talked too much. He had acquired unbounded confidence in his tall clerk, believing and loudly declaring that he could do anything he put his hand to. He put the mill also under Lincoln's care, so that he was afterward able to say that he had once been a miller.

Offutt's admiration of his clerk was not likely to do any harm so long as he should praise only his learning and mental capacity, but when he came to matters of bodily strength and skill he entered dangerous ground. His assertion that Lincoln could out-jump, out-run, and out-wrestle any other man on that prairie was calculated to stir up jealousies and heartburnings.

Bill Clary was the leader of the "Clary's Grove boys," but Jack Armstrong was their champion wrestler. They were a set of unmitigated roughs, whose excesses made them a terror of all peaceably disposed people. What they called fun and recklessly indulged in was often of a sort which, in a properly policed town, would have sent them to the lock-up, if not to the penitentiary. They made it a rule

of the gang to test the mettle of all newcomers, and they had not yet reached Abraham Lincoln's case when they were told what had been claimed for him by Mr. Offutt. Up to that hour he had even had some prospect of escaping their boisterous "initiation," as they called it, by reason of his previous feats on the river. They were willing to take a great deal for granted, but they did not believe that he could throw Jack Armstrong, and a formal challenge for a public wrestling match was duly made. There were good reasons why Lincoln disliked it and tried to avoid the match. He was personally averse to winning the sort of reputation Jack Armstrong gloried in. He was quite willing to admit that Jack was the stronger and better wrestler. He might indeed be so. Moreover, the crowd sure to gather would be "Clary's Grove boys" and their friends, Lincoln to be supported only by windy Mr. Offutt and his other clerk, Mr. W. G. Green. In case of trouble, Lincoln would be practically alone. The match was made, nevertheless, in obedience to a sort of public opinion which Mr. Offutt had challenged by his boasting. Cowardice would have been charged and coarse indignities would have followed if Lincoln had backed out.

Great interest was taken in that affair by the people of New Salem and its neighborhood, but all the odds offered were in favor of Armstrong. He himself expected an easy victory until the first grip was actually taken. He was surprised, then, for all his own vast strength and skill were required to keep him upon his feet. He was not thrown. Tug and

strain as they would, neither of the two athletes for a time seemed to gain any special advantage, but the Clary's Grove boys were stung by even a prospect of a drawn battle. Lincoln proposed to call it one, but Armstrong refused, and it seemed as a sort of signal for his friends and himself to resort to unsportsmanlike measures. They tried hustling and tripping, and he attempted to get a foul hold. Between them they aroused the righteous wrath which always waited just behind Abraham Lincoln's steady good temper. His strength tripled with the rising fire, and Jack Armstrong found himself suddenly throttled, held at arm's length, and shaken like a puppy. There was a general uproar, and a fight was imminent. Lincoln cast off his antagonist and stood with his back against Offutt's store, ready for whatever might come, while Mr. Rutledge, the miller, a man of property and influence, rushed in to keep the peace. He succeeded all the more rapidly in calming the tumult because of the admiration of the roughs for a man who could shake Jack Armstrong, and because of Jack's own conversion from enmity to friendship for the man who had shaken him. He was ready to back Abe Lincoln for anything, at any time and place, thenceforward, as enthusiastically if not so noisily as Mr. Offutt himself.

There was little need for Lincoln to make any further exhibition of his physical strength, except in keeping the peace among his very boisterous new friends. In that direction his services were of value to all New Salem. So should have been the rare example of storekeeping honesty that he set, for he

on one occasion walked several miles and back, in the evening, to correct an error of a few cents in change, and at another time he took similar pains concerning a small short weight in tea.

There were not many books to be had in New Salem, but newspapers came with a fair degree of regularity. Politics ran high, for it was the year in which President Andrew Jackson changed his Cabinet so remarkably, as a sequel to his grotesque championship of Major and Mrs. Eaton. Lincoln was a Whig and an admirer of Henry Clay, but he was at the same time disposed to admire Old Hickory, and was apt to defend rather than assail him when he heard him unduly abused. There were abundant leisure hours for reading, writing, or ciphering, between customers and after all had gone from the store, and as diligent a use was made of time as in the old days in Indiana. Studies in composition brought up knotty points in the proper use of words and suggested the idea of systematic grammar. There was such a thing, and Lincoln went to Mr. Menton Graham, the schoolmaster, to inquire about it. He was told that if he expected to rise in life, a knowledge of grammar was one of the best things he could obtain, and that a copy of Kirkham's English Grammar was to be obtained at Vaner's farm, only six miles from New Salem. The book was purchased and its contents were mastered, after a persistent fashion which permitted no part of them to get away. It was a laborious putting into shape and order the good results of his undirected fireside exercises.



There were apt to be loungers as well as busy customers at the store, and when business did not press the head clerk was often known to wander away from idle gossip, with a book in his hand, to the retirement and shelter of the neighboring woods. Candles were not as scarce as they had been upon Little Pigeon Creek, but they were costly, and a fellow who needed his spare cash for books had to be economical. Not far from the store was a cooper shop, and here of an evening, long after other people were abed and asleep, Abraham Lincoln used to lie and read, lighting shavings, one by one, as the lamp of his patient search for knowledge. Every man of any superior education who visited the village was sought out and questioned as if he had been a printed volume. There was no wonder that a course so extraordinary attracted general attention, and that the people of all that region began to wonder and to talk about the literary acquirements of the tall young fellow who had shaken the burly champion of Clary's Grove.

The fame already acquired as a boatman shortly received a remarkable addition. The roads of Illinois were bad, railroads were yet undreamed of, the population clung to the borders of the water-courses, and these were to the last degree capricious and unreliable for purposes of navigation. Projects for their improvement were broached at an early day, and gave special zest to the great Jacksonian political controversy, as to whether internal improvements could constitutionally be undertaken by the National Government, or whether each State had

sovereign control of them within its own borders. Whigs and Democrats alike, however, living along the Sangamon cherished a hope that, in some hydraulic miracle, that stream might be made to carry a steamboat at all seasons instead of only in a Spring thaw or a Summer freshet.

The hopes of some men took the form of faith sufficient to charter a steamer called the *Talisman*, early in the Spring of 1832, and test the capacity of the Sangamon channel. She was not a large boat, and found her way up to Beardstown without difficulty so far as water was concerned, the impediments to be overcome consisting mainly of ice and driftwood. There was great excitement throughout the whole region, for there might be a new era opening to all freight and passenger traffic, and so to all local prosperity. Every man's lands and crops would be worth more if the trial trip should lead to regular steamboat navigation of the Sangamon. At Beardstown the boat was met by a party of axemen from the upper river, ready to clear away obstructions, and at their head was Abraham Lincoln, chosen as pilot for the hardest part of the experiment. The water in the river was pretty high, and by tearing away a part of the New Salem dam, as well as by much chopping of old driftwood, a passage was forced as far as Bogue's Mill, some distance above. Here, however, the Sangamon began to betray its true character, and went down with such rapidity that, in order to prevent the *Talisman* being left aground for the season, her pilot wisely turned her head downstream again. He was not

too prompt in his decision, for the return voyage was tediously slow and toilsome. He got the boat through at last, and everybody was satisfied that the Sangamon would need a great deal of improvement to make a good river of it. Lincoln, it is said, received forty dollars for his services, and walked all the distance back from Beardstown to New Salem, while the *Talisman* steamed away to St. Louis, to be burned there at her wharf, with other boats, a few months later.

Another failure which occurred at about this time was that of Mr. Denton Offutt. The mill was retransferred to its former owners, the store was sold out, and all of Abraham Lincoln's time was once more upon his hands. He was neither clerk nor miller, and there was no more piloting on the Sangamon to be done. More stirring employment had been provided for him by the determination of the great Sac war chief, Black Hawk, to imitate Tecumseh and rally the red tribes to check the destructive advances of paleface civilization. He was an hereditary chief of his then powerful tribe, and possessed much personal influence over other tribes. Much of this came from their superstitious veneration for the character of prophet and soothsayer which he assumed, in a sort of copy of Tecumseh's brother, Olliwachica. While intriguing actively to organize an extended Indian league, he was, during several successive years, a scourge of the northwestern border of Illinois. In the Spring of 1831 he believed himself prepared for war on a larger scale, but his savage confederacy broke in pieces, and only his own

warriors followed him across the boundary line, in a visionary attempt to reconquer their ancient hunting-grounds, ceded by treaty to the palefaces. He was easily driven back, and was compelled to make a new treaty, which proved to be as strong as the old had been, but no more. In the Spring of 1832 he and his braves were once more in Illinois, confidently expecting to be re-enforced by the Winnebagoes, Pottawatomies, and other Indians. Again the prophet-chief was disappointed, but the force already with him was strong enough to cause general alarm among the frontier settlers, and Governor Reynolds issued a proclamation calling for volunteers.

The State was well supplied with good raw material for an army, very raw, indeed, and men offered with even excessive promptness. A full company was formed from among the Sangamon River settlers, and Abraham Lincoln enlisted, as did the others, as a private, for the volunteers had the right to elect their own officers. He had said that he would have been out the year before but for his contracts with Mr. Offutt, and the military spirit he had displayed had caused him to be chosen captain of a local militia company. Real service was now near, however, and he was as ignorant of tactics as were his Clary's Grove friends who volunteered with him. A man of some property and pretensions named Kirkpatrick, owner of the sawmill at Sangamontown, was a candidate for the captaincy, but full three fourths of the company declared their preference for Lincoln. They wisely decided to have

a captain able to enforce discipline if need should be, and named their strongest man, greatly to the surprise and pleasure of the suddenly promoted private.

## CHAPTER VI.

*How Lincoln Learned all about Volunteers—From Captain to Private—Mustered Out—A Long Canoe Voyage—Reaching Home on Foot—Running for the Legislature—A First and Last Defeat.*

CAPTAIN LINCOLN'S company of volunteers marched to the appointed rendezvous at Beardstown, and there became part of the Fourth Illinois Regiment, commanded by Colonel Samuel Thompson. The regimental organization was completed at Richland, Sangamon County, on April 21st, 1832. On the 27th a march began toward the mouth of Rock River, the entire force mustered for the campaign—about two thousand men—being commanded by General Whiteside and accompanied by Governor Reynolds in person. There were no roads, and the improvised army was only one degree better than a very brave mob. Of discipline, training, or any knowledge of military regulations, not to speak of military science, the officers were for the greater part as ignorant as the men. All the turbulent, uncontrollable characters of a frontier population had been gathered, without any Jackson or Harrison to take them in hand, and it was said that Lincoln's company was exceptionally in need of a captain capable of whipping any ruffian it contained.

On the third day the troops came to Henderson River, only fifty yards wide, but swollen with rain and running swiftly between high banks. The backwoodsmen were not soldiers, but they knew how to handle axes, and before the next morning a bridge had been constructed over which the army passed, with only the loss of a wagon or two, that slipped into the water, horses and all, while going down the bluff to reach the causeway. Governor Reynolds afterward asserted that his men built that bridge in three hours, and other historians have calmly copied him. They were probably very long hours.

There is a story, authentic or not, that while at Henderson River Captain Lincoln got himself put under arrest for one day by violating the order forbidding the discharge of firearms within ten paces of the camp limits.

The march was resumed, and Yellow Banks, on the Mississippi, was reached. Provision boats had been expected to meet the army here, but they had not arrived, and there were three days of famine, for all supplies had been consumed upon the way. The blame was laid by the hungry troops upon their patriotic governor, whose quartermasters had failed to obey his orders. They had been sufficiently restless and insubordinate before that, and were all the more outspoken now. Captain Lincoln is described as having fallen into disgrace with his superior officers on account of the drunkenness and semi-mutinous conduct of his own men, although he had been in nowise to blame.

On May 6th a supply steamer made its appearance,

and the hungry troops were fed. The advance was continued to the mouth of Rock River, and thence by a forced march up that stream about ninety miles to Dixon, where the volunteers were to wait for a detachment of United States regular troops under General Atkinson.

Two battalions of mounted riflemen, under Majors Stillman and Bailey, had reached Dixon before the volunteers, and were boiling over with eagerness for a brush with Black Hawk and his warriors. The newcomers had exhausted their own enthusiasm, for they had left behind their baggage train and had wasted their rations as if more could be had for the asking. Weary and hungry, they went into camp at Dixon, while Governor Reynolds imprudently granted the request of Stillman's and Bailey's men, and permitted them to ride out and see if they could find any Indians.

The self-confident horsemen succeeded only too well. They found but a few at first, near a stream known as Old Man's Creek to that time, and afterward as Stillman's Run. A disorderly rush was made, and two or three red men were caught and killed, but the noise made aroused Black Hawk in his camp, and he came out with a stronger body of warriors to see what was the matter. The scattered palefaces were almost at his mercy, and the only military advantage left them was that of being well mounted. Of this they made so good a use, in the sudden panic which seized them, that only eleven of them were actually killed and scalped, but the affair made a very deep impression upon the volun-



teers. They called it Stillman's Defeat, as if there had been a battle and a severe disaster, and they felt hungrier and more weary of war than ever. They were marched out next day all over the land around Old Man's Creek, but Black Hawk and his braves were already far away, and the volunteers went back to their camp.

Every effort to turn the campaign into a grand military picnic had failed, excepting as to drinking and disorder. There had been wrestling matches among other rough amusements, and in one of these Captain Lincoln was said to have met his match—that is, he had found a man who failed to throw him, but whom he could not throw.

There was absolutely no glory to be gained by that army, and its term of enlistment came with a sort of homesick welcome to the great majority. The war was not ended, but the men had ceased to take any interest in it, and most of them went home, although the governor was again calling for volunteers. Among those who promptly responded, however, was Captain Abraham Lincoln. He was mustered out on May 27th, 1832, and at once, as did many other volunteer officers, including General Whiteside, re-enlisted as a private soldier. He was now a member of a mounted company called the Independent Spy Battalion, commanded by Captain Elijah Iles. Perhaps it might best be described as a company of scouts and despatch carriers. There was enough of hard work for them, with some exposure and much possible peril, but they did no actual fighting and their service was remarkably

brief. On June 16th, 1832, Captain Iles's company, with others of the Illinois volunteers, were mustered out at Whitewater, Wis. The discharge given to private Abraham Lincoln was signed by Lieutenant Robert Anderson of the regular army. It was a very important document at that time, and there was no prophet to tell either of them of another, in which the position of the names was to be reversed, and Robert Anderson would be named a brigadier-general by Abraham Lincoln, for good conduct at Fort Sumter, S. C., in 1861.

The discharged volunteers were to find their way home as best they might, and the means of transportation for private Lincoln and his next friend, George W. Harrison, had been wickedly diminished by some horse thieves. Both lost their horses in the same night, and they set out on foot together, in high spirits, nevertheless, at their escape from the fatigues and discomforts of the Black Hawk War. To the end of his life Lincoln knew more about volunteers and their management, and more about the regular army and its opinions concerning volunteers, than he could have done but for his severe schooling in that memorably mismanaged campaign.

He and Harrison reached Peoria, Ill., on foot. Here they bought a canoe, for which Lincoln whittled out a paddle, and another long stage of their homeward journey was made with less fatigue, if less rapidly. The first good cooked dinner which they had eaten for several days was obtained on a log raft, with which they caught up as they went down the winding river. When they reached the village

of Havana they sold their canoe and set off across country on foot.

There had been genuine patriotism in Lincoln's second enlistment, for there was a reason why he should be in the neighborhood of New Salem rather than in camp in Wisconsin. Just before setting out for the war he had issued a circular, May 9th, 1832, announcing himself as a candidate for the State Legislature, at the election which was to take place in the following August. There were parties in that day with limits less clearly set forth and defined than now, but there was as yet, in Illinois, no such party machinery of all sorts as has since been invented and perfected. Nominating conventions were unknown, and any man could propose his own name for any office, or he could permit his friends to do it for him. The idea of running Lincoln for the Legislature is said to have originated with his friend, James Rutledge, after a remarkable argument made by Mr. Offutt's clerk before the New Salem debating society. He urged it upon Lincoln, and others joined him, and they succeeded in overcoming every difficult objection made to what seemed a piece of uncommon audacity. Perhaps the fact that Lincoln himself felt very little hope of election had something to do with his willingness to enter the army. At all events, he had not slighted his military duties to hasten back, and his canvass was left to take care of itself until about ten days before the election. The eleven other candidates had been stumping the county and were having the field all to themselves. It was the year of Andrew Jackson's second election

as President, and the Whig Party was in process of organization out of such fragments of the old Republican Party as had not been absorbed by the Jackson Democratic Party. Lincoln had been from boyhood an admirer of Old Hickory, and there was as yet no reason why any Democrat in Sangamon County might not strain a point and vote for so very liberal a Whig, if, indeed, he had yet assumed that name.

Lincoln took the stump at once, not to assail Jackson, but to declare himself in favor of a national bank, of internal improvements, and of a high protective tariff. He held a position of peculiar advantages. All the voters of a certain class looked favorably upon the best wrestler in Sangamon County ; only one of the other candidates had, like himself, just returned from driving Black Hawk out of the State ; no other internal improvement orator had actually piloted a steamboat up and down the Sangamon ; no other speaker at any political gathering could illustrate his arguments with so many or such keenly-pointed stories. He was just the man for that constituency, and there was only one thing against him. He was beaten by the simple fact that only a part of his constituency had an opportunity for getting acquainted with him. The vote of the New Salem precinct explained the matter. There were two hundred and seventy-seven votes cast, and all but three of them were for Lincoln. Other precincts adjoining did well for him, but as distances increased the majorities against him grew. Still, it was no disgrace that he was one of eight defeated

candidates, of whom five received a smaller number of votes. He was only twenty-three years of age, but he had stepped out from obscurity already, had become a marked man in Sangamon County, had established for himself a character, a reputation, and had been recognized as a born leader of men.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Out of Work—Lincoln a Merchant—The Credit System—A Financial Crash—Postmaster—Turning Surveyor—Small Law Cases—Horse Racing—The Village Peacemaker.*

NEW SALEM was altogether an experiment as a village, and every business concern in it was experimental. Very nearly all transactions were upon a peculiarly liberal credit system, and any man who wearied of a speculation could get rid of it by taking some other man's note for its supposable value. Mr. Offutt had simply disappeared when his undertakings miscarried, but the riverside hamlet still contained four other mercantile concerns, each of which offered for sale an exceedingly miscellaneous collection of such goods as prairie people might be tempted into buying. What seems to have been the smaller of the four was conducted by Mr. Rutledge, the miller; a second by Row and Jim Herndon, special friends of Lincoln, and a third by a man named Reuben Radford. Lincoln was boarding with one of the Herndons shortly after the conclusion of his political campaign, and was looking around for some means of earning the necessary money to pay for food and shelter there or elsewhere. There is a tradition that he even spoke of the fact that so strong a man as he would perhaps do well as a

blacksmith, but there was a very different opening in course of preparation for him.

Jim Herndon grew dissatisfied with the dull business prospects of New Salem, and sold his share in the store and stock to a dissipated fellow named Berry, with whom Row Herndon shortly quarrelled. Lincoln had no money, but he was willing to help his friend Row out of an unpleasant situation, and readily gave his note for the remainder of that establishment. The firm of Lincoln & Berry succeeded to the hopes and prospects of Herndon Brothers, such as they were, and men who started in that way had been known to get along very well.

The next step was prepared by the riotous fun of the Clary's Grove boys. They had no especial grudge against Reuben Berry, but the spirit of mischief by which they were at times possessed led them to smash his store windows for him one pleasant evening. He was so disgusted the next morning by the appearance of his half-wrecked store, that he sold it on the spot for four hundred dollars to an acquaintance named William Greene. The latter asked Lincoln to come over and examine the purchase for him, and the result was every way satisfactory. Lincoln and Berry bought him out, giving him their notes for six hundred and fifty dollars. The stock-in-trade of Mr. Rutledge was also secured shortly, and the new firm had but one rival remaining. This was the store kept by Hill & McNeil, and it was of the same general pattern.

The rail splitter, day laborer, flatboatman, pilot, clerk, soldier, miller, politician, had now become a

merchant, but he had all the while been a hard student, and so he continued to be during the rapid changes which now followed.

Mr. Lincoln himself never became a tavern keeper, but the firm narrowly missed adding such an enterprise to their other undertakings. Perhaps Mr. Berry's partner was inclined to believe him better fitted to that business, as it was then conducted in Illinois, than to anything demanding sobriety and good conduct. At all events, on March 6th, 1833, Berry took out a license from the County Court of Sangamon County for a tavern which was never to be opened. The fees amounted to seven dollars, and the license minutely specified the rates at which the public were to receive accommodations. The prices of liquors were fixed, with those of breakfast, dinner, supper, lodgings, and the keeping of horses.

The miserable character of Berry was more than a mere annoyance—it was a barrier in the way of success—and at about this time a pair of brothers named Trent offered to buy out the entire concern on credit. Their proposal was accepted, but Lincoln was not a good business man. He took their notes for the property, but did not make out to shift upon their shoulders the responsibilities which he had himself assumed. All he gained was an escape from association with Berry and from serving as a salesman in the store. Everything else was a dead loss, as the Trent Brothers quickly sold what they could of the stock and ran away, leaving only a pitiful sort of business wreck behind them. Berry had gone to ruin altogether, his bad habits ending



his life not long afterward, and the notes given for the three lots of goods had but one honest name upon them, that of Abraham Lincoln. He had no property, he had no paying occupation, but all of that paper was worth every dollar it promised to pay.

On May 7th, 1833, Mr. Lincoln was appointed postmaster of New Salem, and he held the office during three years following. It was no honor whatever, and it was not a source of profit. The settlers of the Sangamon were not letter writers or newspaper readers. It is even said that at times the postmaster's hat contained all the mail on hand for distribution, and that his office travelled around the village with him.

The moment of deliverance from store duties witnessed an increased devotion to the one object in life which really had any hold upon the hope or ambition of Lincoln. He was intensely, absorbingly a student of every law book that he could borrow, and he had latterly made friends, even as far away as Springfield, from whom he could obtain not only books but valuable suggestions as to their uses.

New settlers were coming in rapidly to turn the broad acres of the Sangamon prairie into farms, and the county surveyor, Mr. John Calhoun, found himself under an increasing pressure of work. He required trustworthy deputies in different localities of the wide area under his supervision. Among these was the New Salem precinct, and it contained only one man in whom he felt any confidence. He knew Mr. Lincoln, and although the latter knew nothing of surveying, Mr. Calhoun urged him to undertake

the business, bringing him a book of instruction. It was the visit of a friend in need, and an offer of an honorable, profitable occupation. The book on surveying was taken hold of with almost sleepless energy, and all the long hours already given to arithmetic in the Indiana woods and afterward became of present importance. At the end of only six weeks Lincoln reported to Mr. Calhoun for active service, and his new occupation began. Enough of business came to him at once to afford him the means of living and of even buying a book now and then. There was nothing merely temporary or experimental about it, for all the work done was honest, thorough, and accurate. When Mr. Calhoun's term of office expired, in September, 1835, his successor, Mr. T. M. Neale, needed just such a painstaking deputy in the New Salem precinct, and Mr. Lincoln was reappointed. His work had not been altogether local, however, for in 1834 he was appointed one of the viewers to locate a county road twenty-six miles in length, and the entire work was performed under his supervision.

The notes given for the several stocks of goods consolidated by Lincoln & Berry, and sold to the Trent Brothers, all fell due in the year 1833, but only one of them brought immediate trouble to Mr. Calhoun's hard-working deputy. It was the one for four hundred dollars given to Mr. Radford when Bill Greene's good bargain was taken off his hands. It had become the property of a man named Van Bergen, who was not disposed to wait for his money. He sued upon the note when it matured, obtained

judgment, and the sheriff did his duty. All the effects of the debtor upon which the officer could lay his hands were a horse, saddle, bridle, and a set of surveying instruments. These were seized, and their public sale was advertised. It was a severe blow, and there seemed no way of escape, since even if their unfortunate owner should attend the sale and buy them in, they would at once be liable to another seizure and another sale. He did not attend the sale, therefore, but two of his friends, named Short and Greene, were there to do for him better than he could do for himself. They purchased the entire lot for two hundred and forty-five dollars, and brought all back in triumph. The judgment was not satisfied, indeed, but it could not any more touch that property. Lincoln could ride around the county and survey in freedom with the horse and instruments owned by Short and Greene. The most popular man in all that region was not to be stripped altogether of the means of earning a living.

Popularity was coming through several new channels, and the New Salem people were beginning to feel something like Denton Offutt's early admiration for their tall postmaster. He now knew enough of law to pettifog small cases, and his neighbors brought to him their legal difficulties continually. He was sure to give pretty good advice, and they all took kindly to a lawyer who as yet did not consider himself entitled to charge any fee for his services. The entire community also, with one accord, elected him judge as well as counsellor. That is, the one public amusement for which they felt

any enthusiasm was horse racing, and not only was Lincoln an uncommonly good horseman, but he was an absolutely fair and just arbitrator of all race-course disputes. It was of no use for any man to question one of his decisions, and no aggrieved party was at all likely to vent his disappointment by an attempt to "thrash the referee," in Western style. The invitations, therefore, to act as judge of races here and there became so numerous as to be irksome and compel a general rejection of the position. It was all a curious but emphatic declaration, nevertheless, of the verdict which Lincoln's neighbors had passed upon him.

There was yet another and exceedingly honorable channel through which popularity came. Great bodily strength, increasing now in a frame unassailed by bad habits of any kind, and accompanied by a high reputation for personal courage, enabled the postmaster to be also the peacemaker of New Salem. There could not any undisturbed fighting be done except in his absence. He could take any ordinary pair of combatants, one in each hand, and shake all the fight out of them. All the more respectable and orderly elements of society, therefore, came to look up to Lincoln as the trusted guardian of law and order. He was a continual and very practical witness against intemperance, never touching any kind of liquor and arguing against its use by others. He even abstained from tobacco, and all the tremendous natural forces which had been given him were kept in good condition while he was training himself for the great life work before him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*A Transition Time—A Romantic Legend—Lincoln Elected to the Legislature—Flush Times and Public Improvements—Religious Controversies—Bright Days and Dark Days—Poetical Favorites.*

THOSE who have been accustomed to the comforts of well-ordered communities and to the graces of polished society might imagine that the life of Abraham Lincoln had thus far been unsatisfactory, if not dark and troubled ; but it was not so. More had come to him than to many thousands of other young fellows born in backwoods cabins. He had been given a stronger body, better fitted than most for the endurance of toil and of seeming privation. More than ordinary mental capacity, for ideas to take root in, had been accompanied by uncommon keenness of moral sense and perception, enabling him to avoid the pits of vice into which others were continually falling. Putting all his gifts together, he was a much-favored young pioneer, and did not stand in need of any man's commiseration. He was rising, also, with extraordinary rapidity, toward a social plane far above that in which he had been born, and he had all kinds of encouragement to continue the determined efforts which he was making. They were, indeed, untiringly persistent, and they

were winning for him the sincere respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens.

The year 1834 was a kind of transition time for Lincoln. He was not studying law any harder than before, for that was impossible. A large part of his old debts remained unpaid, but all men knew that he was clearing them away as fast as he could, and they honored him accordingly. It was only too common a result of any financial disaster that somebody should suddenly be missing, leaving behind a lot of worthless notes and unsettled accounts. The man who sturdily settled himself to the stern duty of paying up was something in the nature of a local phenomenon, for his neighbors to talk about and be proud of.

Surveying work in a prairie country, aided by the perfect system of the United States General Land Office, was simple and easy to the last degree compared with the perilous, adventurous toil of George Washington among the mountains and valleys of Western Virginia, in the old colonial days. The fees earned by the Sangamon County deputy surveyor, however, were ample for his very moderate expenses, and enabled him to make a continued series of small payments upon his promissory notes. He was in fairly easy circumstances, therefore, having once for all made his escape from actual poverty.

There is a sadly romantic legend of yet another brightness which dawned upon Lincoln's life during the year 1834, only to be hidden soon under a deep, black shadow. It is the story of Ann Rutledge, daughter of James Rutledge, perhaps the most pros-

perous man in New Salem. She is said to have possessed many personal and mental attractions, combined with a sensitive nature and genuine sincerity. When Lincoln first became acquainted with her, soon after his arrival, she was understood to be betrothed to Mr. McNeil, of the firm of Hill & McNeil. By that name he had been known since his coming to Sangamon County, but one day he revealed to Ann Rutledge the true story of his life. His real name was McNamar, and for some cause he had concealed it on leaving his home in one of the Eastern States. He had come to the West to make money, in order that he might be able to return and care for his father in his old age. He was now closing up his business, having succeeded well; he was going home on a visit, and he would speedily return to keep his plighted troth. She heard and she believed him. He went, but he did not return, and even letters ceased to bring her any assurance of his being yet alive. If not dead, he was surely unfaithful, and Ann Rutledge was forever free from her promise to him. She was but nineteen years old when so severe a trial came to her, and it was shortly followed by another, for a heart more true than McNamar's was offered her, and her keen sense of honor forbade her to accept it. She was fully capable of appreciating such a noble young manhood as that of Lincoln, and that made her internal struggle more painful. Slowly her sense of obligation to a false lover wore away, and it looked, for a time, as if a new and better hope had taken the place of the old. The legend tells that he gave her

all the great love of which his intense and earnest heart was capable ; that his love was returned, and that there was a betrothal before the end of the year 1834.

It is not often that the country is stirred by a great political excitement half way between two Presidential elections, but one of the exceptions occurred now, in the middle of Andrew Jackson's stormy second term. The Whig Party was increasing rapidly in numbers and organization, but as yet had gained only a moderate degree of strength in Illinois. In Sangamon County it was in a minority, and no Whig candidate could hope for success without the aid of Democratic votes or without attracting the floating mass which drifts about between the party lines.

Almost as a matter of course, Abraham Lincoln was again a candidate for the Legislature in 1834, urgent invitations coming to him from both Whigs and Democrats. His own neighborhood was entirely absorbed by "the Lincoln party," so far as his candidacy was concerned. A vigorous canvass followed, and when the ballots were counted, the New Salem deputy surveyor and law student headed the list of successful candidates. He had received six more votes than were given to any other man. It was a tremendous testimonial to the personal reputation of a youth of twenty-five, so poor that he was compelled, after his election, to borrow the money required for his outfit and for his travelling expenses.

The State capital of Illinois was then at the town



of Vandalia, in the southern part of the State. Legislators from the central and northern counties found their journeys, coming and going, over prairie roads and no roads at all, exceedingly irksome. The question of the removal of the seat of government to a better place had been discussed in session after session, and its decision had been postponed only by the number and urgency of the clamorous constituencies presenting the rival claims of their respective localities.

The Legislature which assembled in the Autumn of 1834 contained a large proportion of the young and rising politicians of Illinois. Owing to the prevailing method of making nominations and obtaining elections, almost every man was one who, like Lincoln, had developed enough of individual character and personal reputation to secure an election without such help as almost insignificant and unknown men can nowadays obtain through managing committees, packed primaries, and party machinery. There were many who had already acquired legislative experience, and the new member from Sangamon County was altogether a green hand. He was but little heard from during that first session, but he was just the man to become well acquainted with his fellow-members and to make a thorough study of the new field which was opening before him.

There was an immense amount of purely experimental legislation at that time before the Legislature, and its debates and divisions dealt with subjects concerning which hardly any of the debaters

and voters knew anything. The great question of internal improvements, to be carried on at the public cost, was closely wedded to schemes of banking and finance. Lincoln believed in the internal improvement policy. He had piloted one steamer up and down the Sangamon River, and saw no reason why that and other streams might not be given permanent navigable channels. Surely there was water enough every now and then. As to the cost of the many miracles of engineering skill proposed, the State had power to create banks, to borrow money, and to levy taxes upon all the property values which were to be manufactured or increased by means of the grand system of development which was dazzling the eyes of the people of Illinois. De Witt Clinton had accomplished wonders for the State of New York by inventing and forcing to a completion the Erie Canal, and Lincoln was not alone in his now budding ambition to become a kind of Prairie State Clinton.

At Vandalia, quaint and commonplace as the appearance of the place might be, there was gathered during every session of the Legislature more than a little of the good result of cultivation which takes the name of "society." For the first time in his life Lincoln began to see something of it and to mingle freely, from day to day, with higher types of manhood and womanhood than those among whom his lot had hitherto been cast. There was much for him to learn, but it was not at all to be wondered at if there were some things which he could not altogether unlearn. It was too late for

external influences to bestow any high degree of polish upon the rude, gaunt strength of body and mind which had enabled him to fight his battle of life thus far so successfully. The session ended without noticeable incident to him, and he returned to his work as deputy surveyor of Sangamon County and to his unremitting toil over his law books.

The religious element had not been present in the childhood days of Abraham Lincoln. There had been no Bible in his father's log cabin until after Mrs. Sally Johnston became its mistress as Mrs. Lincoln. She did her duty faithfully, but the earlier impressions, whose importance is so well understood, had not been made upon the mind of her thoughtful stepson. It was not long, moreover, before he drifted away from the home which her presence had created, and there was but little religious life among the other clearings of Southern Indiana. There was even less in and about the somewhat boisterous village of New Salem. Such occasional preaching as came to that community attracted thin audiences compared to the crowds which gathered around race tracks or to hear political addresses. A perfect picture of the time can best be obtained by those who will read Peter Cartwright's invaluable chronicle of his own life work. He and others like him toiled among heathen, as did Adoniram Judson and his colaborers in the far East. Nevertheless, a thinking man like Lincoln, a reader of the Bible, could not but find himself brought face to face with the great problems which are presented in this world by every sugges-

tion of another world beyond it. He wrestled with them after his own fashion, unaided. There were representatives of several sects to be met and argued with from time to time, and each demanded agreement with some curious and fragmentary theology. Then came troublesome books, notably the writings of Volney and Thomas Paine, skilfully setting up straw giants to represent Christianity, knocking them down, and telling readers to reject everything else bearing the same name. Lincoln was quite ready to refuse belief in anything which could be upset in that manner, and there was a time, just before he went to the Legislature, and, perhaps, continuing somewhat later, when he openly declared himself a sceptic. He was not so by any means, for he was only a free thinker. That much-abused term is only stolen property when it is assumed as a sort of crust with which to keep out freedom of thought, and Lincoln was genuinely seeking for the truth. He went so far as to write a treatise, long enough for a good-sized pamphlet, in which he set forth his objections to such theology as he was then acquainted with. He read it to a circle of friends, and one of them kindly burned it up for him, as the best use that could be made of it. The fermentation period of his dealings with religion, so very common to active and inquiring minds, passed away as naturally as if it had been the whooping-cough, and the results which he attained in the course of his subsequent search for truth and experience of life are to be sought for in public and private utterances and in acts now familiar to all men.

The Spring of 1835 opened even more brightly than had that of 1834. The entire country, east and west, believed itself to be in the enjoyment of great prosperity, and was feverishly reaching out for more. Every kind of speculation was at its height, and the credit system was expanding with pernicious rapidity. Settlers were coming fast into Illinois, and the quarter of a million already there were eager to get the State into prime, tax-paying readiness for the million more who were expected to come in shortly and buy lands and corner lots at fantastic prices.

New Salem itself was a busy little place, and Springfield, nine miles away, was not yet large enough to drain all the life from the villages around it. There was much prosperity there, however, and there were prosperous lawyers, with libraries and with kindly good will to a rising young fellow who wanted to borrow books of them. Before Lincoln owned a horse he had even walked all the way to Springfield after a volume of Blackstone, and had then read in it all the long walk home. He was now getting hold of a few books of his own, but his debts kept him poor, in spite of the increasing fees of his surveying. He was still postmaster, as well as deputy surveyor and member of the Legislature, but the duties of the three offices did not seem to clash.

Summer came, and the legend of Ann Rutledge tells of one bright day when she gave up waiting for McNamar and promised her hand to Abraham Lincoln. She had suffered too much, however, and

the long trial had drained the fountains of her life. Even then she was fading, and before the Summer ended she had passed away. Her death took place upon August 25th, and there is an intensely pathetic story told of the suffering of her true-hearted lover. He was for a time compelled to give up his law books and his work and to remain under the watchful care of friends until his deep melancholy passed away.

There was an especial cause why a love of poetry, noticeable even in boyhood, should show increasing strength during all these later days. There were poetical favorites, indeed, whose selection testified to some emotional depth in the reader rather than to any great power in the writer, but these were exceptional. Then and afterward a first place was accorded to Shakespeare, and a fair acquaintance was obtained with the work of other masters, but it was as a student of men that Lincoln pored over the great dramatist. Long years afterward the writer of this book sat by him during an admirable rendering of Falstaff by the actor Hackett, studying the President while he studied the play. Not one smile passed across Lincoln's face, and at the end he arose silently, with a long-drawn breath, as from some absorbing task that he had finished.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Reorganization of Parties—Presidential Campaign of 1836—The Long Nine—Making Haste to be Rich—Lincoln's Anti-Slavery Protest—The State Capital Removed to Springfield.*

MR. LINCOLN attended the Winter session of the Legislature, 1835-36, closing the term for which he had been elected without having advanced beyond the very quiet position which he had at first so modestly assumed. He made no speeches, but attended faithfully to his duties as a member of the Committee on Accounts and Expenditures. His constituents heard a good report of him, however, and were well satisfied with him. He returned among them a wiser and stronger man, and he seemed to have entirely recovered his cheerfulness and to have retained the kindly ways for which they liked him so well.

The year 1836 was notable in the political history of the United States. The larger part of the old Republican Party had long since assumed another shape and name, under Jackson and Van Buren, as the Democratic Party. Another section of the Jeffersonian political power had followed Henry Clay and his associates, and was now known as the Whig Party, although still claiming the name of Republican. It had not yet succeeded in drawing in all the

fragments of rebellion against the iron rule of Andrew Jackson. A severe defeat at the polls and a few years of hard times were needed to complete that process, but the country was preparing itself for its lessons more rapidly than it was aware of.

The National Democratic Convention, prudently summoned a full year in advance, had met at Baltimore in May, 1835, and had nominated Martin Van Buren to succeed General Jackson, with Colonel Richard M. Johnson for Vice-President. There was no power yet in existence to bring the elements of the Opposition together. The Whig Party proper nominated General William Henry Harrison and Francis Granger, and succeeded in securing for them ninety-three electoral votes. One hundred and seventy electors declared for Martin Van Buren, but some of even these refused to vote for Colonel Johnson, and he was afterward made Vice-President by the Senate. The remaining forces, which were shortly to become Whig, were divided among three candidates. Daniel Webster received fourteen, from Massachusetts. Willie P. Mangum was honored by eleven, from North Carolina. Much the largest fragmentary organization, outside of the great parties, was that which nominated Hugh L. White, of Tennessee, for President. He had been a prominent Republican and for many years a warm, personal friend of General Jackson. The fact that Abraham Lincoln was not yet in full accord with Clay and Harrison was signalized by his support of Judge White in the Presidential campaign of 1836, and throws light upon the other fact that his own



first and second nominations to the Legislature were warmly sustained by numbers of Democrats—that is, of old Republicans, who did not regard him as a very distinctly marked Whig.

One of the important acts of the Illinois Legislature of 1835–36 had been a reapportionment of the State for purposes of representation. By the new law, and owing to its increased population, Sangamon County was entitled to two State Senators and seven members of the Lower House. All of these were to be chosen not by minor districts, but by the full county vote. There were no nominating conventions, and the manner in which candidates were brought before the people is well illustrated by Lincoln's own announcement in the *Springfield Journal*:

“NEW SALEM, June 13, 1836.

“*To the Editor of the ‘Journal.’*

“In your paper of last Saturday I see a communication over the signature ‘Many Voters,’ in which the candidates who are announced in the *Journal* are called upon to ‘show their hands.’ Agreed. Here’s mine.

“I go for all sharing the privileges of the Government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently, I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).

“If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me.

“While acting as their representative, I shall be governed by their will on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is, and upon all others I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests. Whether elected or not, I go for distributing the proceeds of the sale of the public lands to the several States, to enable our State, in common with others, to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying interest on it.

"If alive on the first Monday in November, I shall vote for Hugh L. White for President.

"Very respectfully,

"A. LINCOLN."

An uncommonly vigorous canvass followed, and it is said by good authority that Mr. Lincoln's oratorical power exhibited marked tokens of improvement. Even his voice had undergone a change, correspondent to the mental development which enabled him to use it more effectively. He was elected by a larger majority than that given to any other of the successful candidates. They were all tall men, their aggregate measurement being fifty-five feet, to which Lincoln contributed six feet and four inches. They shortly became noted in the legislative contests at Vandalia as "the Long Nine," and the title was not always accompanied with complimentary epithets.

The Presidential candidacy of Hugh L. White had served the important purpose of rallying a considerable political force and leading it into the Whig Party, of which Mr. Lincoln now became a recognized member and local leader. Its consolidated strength gave it very firm control of Sangamon County, but in other parts of the State the old-time Democratic ascendancy continued.

The vote which Mr. Lincoln had received gave him a first place in the county delegations of which he was the tallest member. He at once began to prove that his first term had been to him a kind of legislative apprenticeship, of which he had made remarkably good use. He had so studied

parliamentary law and tactics that he returned to Vandalia as an adroit and experienced manager.

Now that the Presidential campaign was over, there was no very close connection between State and national politics. The very men, for instance, who were most bitterly opposed to a Bank of the United States were all the more ready to unite with the Whigs they had defeated in chartering what some people called State banks, and what others described as rag-money mills. Democrats, who maintained that the general Government had no power over the subject of internal improvements, declared that they were, nevertheless, in favor of unlimited development under the direction of the several States. The entire population of Illinois, as well as of other commonwealths, east and west, was going crazy with land speculation and a mania for sudden wealth. The several Legislatures did but represent the people who elected them. New towns and cities were dreamed of, planned, mapped out, named, and, as the phrase was, were "located" at the junction of every pair of respectable streams and at almost every cross road. Canal and railway enterprises, which had been taking shape during several previous years, received now the full favor of the Vandalia lawgivers, and the new prominence of Abraham Lincoln was greatly enhanced by the skill and vigor with which he advocated scheme after scheme. He had no pecuniary interest in any of them. His hands were utterly clean of any suspicion of jobbery, and that very fact, well and publicly known, gave his arguments a power which they

might not have possessed if coming from the lips of some of his fellow-members.

The bursting of the speculative bubble was very nearly at hand, but mere local effervescence might have died harmlessly away if there had been anything local in the financial crisis of 1837. What have seemed to some biographers of Lincoln wild and visionary projects, to be excused as born in the excited brain of an inexperienced youth, were neither wild nor visionary, and need no apology whatever. He was not even feverishly hasty. The one defect running through all was an ignorance of sound financial principles, which was almost world-wide and not confined to Illinois legislators. The financial disturbances which followed did not begin in America, but in Europe, and they crossed the Atlantic as a tidal wave, striking the Eastern States first and rolling westward, everywhere finding all things made ready for them by the absence of a trustworthy system of banking and exchanges. The land and town lot craze made the other preparations more complete. The Legislature attempted to provide for a canal uniting the waters of the Mississippi and the great lakes, and for the construction of about thirteen hundred and fifty miles of railroads. All are now in existence, with many and many another hundred miles of rail, which made the river-channel improvements unnecessary. There was a temporary postponement of the great plan of development, and that was all. When the Legislature adjourned, March 4th, 1837, there were signs of the financial storm which was coming, but these were

more clearly perceptible in the East than in the West.

The day before the adjournment Mr. Lincoln made his first public record as an anti-slavery man. There were but few abolitionists in the United States at that time, an almost proscribed handful of men and women, hooted at, derided, mobbed, regarded as fanatical incendiaries. There was, indeed, a strong and growing feeling of opposition to any farther extension of slavery north of the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , which had been agreed upon as its northern limit, but the establishment of that barrier had served to satisfy the easy consciences of nearly all men. Any expression of sentiments threatening a disturbance of the peculiar institution upon its own ground was enough to make a marked man of the speaker or writer. In some communities it might destroy his political and social standing, while in others it might imperil his property and his life.

The State Legislature of Illinois was soundly and conservatively pro-slavery, and had so declared itself, but it contained one member who had distinct opinions of his own, and who found one other member bold enough to agree with him. Together they drew up a written protest, which, on March 3d, 1837, they presented to the House, caused to be read and recorded upon the official journal. It was as follows :

“ Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

“ They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both

injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the Constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of the District.

"The difference between these opinions and those contained in the said resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

"DAN. STONE,

"A. LINCOLN,

*"Representatives from the County of Sangamon."*

So moderate a protest, signed by but two men, made hardly a ripple ; but in after years the record was hunted up and made the most of by two great parties, because of one of those names. There is a sense in which it is to be regarded as Lincoln's declaration of war.

So far as his popularity at home was concerned, his most important work during that session related to the removal of the State capital from Vandalia to Springfield. In the year 1834 the question had been voted upon by the people of Illinois without obtaining any more important result than a very long list of towns as candidates. Springfield was nominally third upon the list, but was really the second choice of every more southerly constituency. Upon Mr. Lincoln fell the task of concentrating all this strength and of so balancing the rivalries between northern towns as to prevent any of them from rallying too many supporters. It is even said that there were aspiring cities and counties who

were willing to yield the capital to the Long Nine, and receive in payment the votes of the latter for a railway charter or a new bank. However that may be, the final triumph of Springfield was frankly and generally admitted to have been the work of Mr. Lincoln, and he and his colleagues returned home to receive something like civil honors from a grateful people. Public dinners were given them here and there, and in the toasts announced and in the speeches made the name of Mr. Lincoln received frequent and enthusiastic tributes. Sangamon County would have forgiven him even a stronger anti-slavery protest, and would have also altogether forgotten it in its fervid gratitude for the great gift of the seat of State Government. Besides, he and Dan Stone had taken pains to separate themselves from all abolitionists. It was a great year for that political sect, and their numbers and power were suddenly increased fourfold before it ended, for in the Autumn of 1837 the pro-slavery mob of Alton, Ill., murdered Elijah P. Lovejoy and threw his abolition press and types into the Mississippi. Other outrages and cruelties elsewhere helped them amazingly, but they were not yet quite strong enough to organize a political party.

## CHAPTER X.

*Removal to Springfield—Admitted to the Bar—The Panic of 1837—The Log-Cabin Campaign—A Stormy Courtship—Melancholia—True Friendships—A Burlesque on Duelling—Marriage.*

IT required something more than an act of the Legislature to transfer the State capital from Vandalia to Springfield. The process of removing all the official machinery and appliances was not completed until the year 1839.

There was, however, no great difficulty in transporting all the personal effects of Abraham Lincoln from New Salem to the young city, which was thenceforth to be his place of residence. He was admitted to the bar in the Spring of 1837, not long after returning from Vandalia, and he at once formed a partnership with his old friend John T. Stuart, the man who had loaned him Blackstone's Commentaries to read on the way home. Law practice was sure to come to a man so very well known throughout the county, and Mr. Stuart himself was prominent both as a lawyer and as a politician. The worst drawback to Lincoln's immediate comfort was the fact that, while fees were moderate, some of his old debts yet remained unpaid. He adopted a most economical style of living. At first he slept upon a lounge in his own law office. After-



ward he shared lodgings with a young merchant, a Kentuckian, named Joshua F. Speed. During several years he took his meals at the house of Mr. William Butler, who had been a member of the famous Long Nine.

Springfield contained at this time about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and was the centre of trade for an exceedingly rich and prosperous agricultural region. While as yet few of its citizens had accumulated large wealth, a goodly proportion of them were in independent circumstances, and the town prided itself upon its good society. The bar of Sangamon County and of the Eighth Judicial District, of which it was part, was of a high grade for so very new a county. A surprisingly large number of the men with whom Lincoln contested his earlier law cases afterward arose to national fame. He was at first but imperfectly prepared for successful rivalry with men whose scholarship had been obtained in the regular way and whose legal studies had been well directed and systematic. There were funds of information familiar to them from childhood to which he was a stranger. A host of things deemed important by men of liberal education were to him as old rubbish in a curiosity shop. He seemed to them an ill-dressed, uncouth, unpromising sort of fellow, a good enough manager of small cases, no doubt, but who would probably never become much of a lawyer. He certainly was not as yet, but he was studying hard, and it was soon discovered that he had a peculiar faculty for making a jury wonder how the other side could take a different view of a

case from the one which they held and in which Mr. Lincoln perfectly agreed with them. His clients got their rights in those cases, and the juries were satisfied that they could have settled such plain and simple matters of justice without the help of lawyers. Of course, it was Lincoln's duty to talk and to earn his fee, they sometimes said, and he was a right down good fellow. Nevertheless, older lawyers who listened or who were unexpectedly beaten began to ponder the matter.

The financial storm of 1837 struck the Atlantic coast late in the Autumn of 1836. It blew pretty hard during the Winter, but did not arise to a hurricane until the Spring of 1837. The banks of New York suspended specie payments on May 10th, those of Philadelphia and the Bank of the United States followed two days later, and President Van Buren was waited upon by delegations of panic-stricken, angry business men, who told him to his face that he and his party had brought ruin upon the country. His emphatic denial of their indictment was entirely correct, but the view of the matter which they presented was widely accepted throughout the country. It supplies an explanation of the otherwise puzzling fact that the universal crash did no harm to the popularity of Whig politicians like Abraham Lincoln. All Whigs, however much they had favored wild schemes and speculations, were provided with a Democratic scapegoat. As for Lincoln himself, his constituents knew that he had not been a speculator and that he had not tried to make any money. He did not then know

how and to the end of his life he never learned how.

The Illinois bubble did not break at once. The governor called a special session of the Legislature, and the law makers assembled at Vandalia in July to manufacture some continued prosperity. They at once passed an act authorizing all the banks in the State to suspend specie payments, while pouring out almost unlimited paper. Not one scheme of internal improvement was checked, and the misguided commonwealth went on plunging into debt at a terrific rate. What they did and what they did not do hardly has any biographical value, except from the suggestion that the tallest man of the Long Nine was at this time obtaining ideas which were afterward to be of value to him in dealing with the finances of the nation.

There has been a correspondence preserved which proves that at about the time of Mr. Lincoln's removal from New Salem to Springfield a brief and unimportant bit of romance drifted over him and away from him. The letters which passed between him and Mary Owens prove little more than that neither of them underwent any great disappointment when the affair came to an end. Perhaps their mutual friends had too much to do with it all the while.

There was an election of members of the Legislature in the Autumn of 1838, and there was a sharp contest over some of the names presented to the people, but there was no uncertainty whatever concerning the re-election of Mr. Lincoln. Returned

by an emphatic vote, another testimonial to the position he had won awaited his arrival at Vandalia. The Democratic Party controlled the Assembly by a small but firm majority, and their candidate for Speaker was sure of election. The Whigs could give no more than a public compliment in making a nomination, but it was a high honor, nevertheless, and they gave it to Mr. Lincoln. Only seven years had elapsed since he had piloted a flatboat down the Sangamon, and now a body of the chosen representatives of the people pointed him out as their acknowledged leader. He continued to be so in the debates which followed, and the course of political events confirmed them in the verdict which they then recorded. It was formally repeated by the succeeding Legislature in 1840, but the Assembly did not even then contain a sufficient number of Whigs to make their captain Speaker of the House. Captain he was, although he had scrupulously avoided assuming or wearing the military title which had been put upon him in the Black Hawk War. He had no share in the very common weakness for that sort of empty ornament.

Neither of the parties succeeded in inventing any magical process by means of which money could be raised without taxation, and the progress of the State was perceptibly retarded during several years by the consequences of the legislative work done during what were called "the flush times."

The rich farming lands were there, however, and in a marvellously short time the expected immigration poured in, to create greater wealth and to build

towns and cities more rapidly than even the Vandavia political financiers had dared to predict.

The Whig Party grew tremendously during the Presidential term of Martin Van Buren, and in 1840 its National Convention nominated General William Henry Harrison for President, with a very fair prospect of success. The several factions which had acted separately in 1836 united their forces now upon the man whose popularity in the great West had begun with the Indian campaign of old Mad Anthony Wayne. They placed John Tyler, of Virginia, on the same ticket with him, to make sure of a part of Hugh L. White's Eastern vote, but it would have been much wiser to have selected a Whig. The Democratic Party renominated Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson, and the great log-cabin campaign began.

The Whigs of Illinois were well aware that they were in a seemingly hopeless minority, but they fought hard. Mr. Lincoln was one of their candidates for Presidential electors, and took the stump for Harrison and Tyler with a vigor and eloquence which greatly increased his reputation. It had been somewhat local up to this time, but he now made his peculiar oratory known to the great audiences assembled at Whig barbecues and mass meetings all over the State. The Whig Party failed to carry Illinois, and its five votes were given to Van Buren, but they were of little importance, for the whole country gave him only sixty, while Harrison and Tyler received two hundred and thirty-four. What seemed to be a great Whig victory had been won,

but General Harrison's death, one month after his inauguration, in 1841, transferred the power of the national Executive office to John Tyler, an extreme State-Rights Democrat. There was no issue presented in the campaign of 1840 which contained so much as a suggestion of the slavery question, and Mr. Lincoln's electoral tour came to a close without any occasion for disclosing such views as he then had formed or was forming. Upon all other issues, his position was simply that of his party, advocated by him enthusiastically after a fashion which left his hearers eager to hear him again, whenever opportunity might offer.

The removal of the State capital to Springfield was completed during the year 1839, but at about the same time there was an arrival which was of vastly greater importance to Abraham Lincoln. Mrs. Ninian Edwards, whose husband was one of his intimate friends, received a visit from her sister, Miss Mary Todd. They were daughters of Hon. Robert S. Todd, of Kentucky, belonging to one of the leading pioneer families from Virginia. The visit turned into something resembling a residence, and Mary Todd became one of the acknowledged stars of Springfield society. She was quite pretty, well educated, and possessed a fund of high spirits, which prevented her from keeping her somewhat caustic wit under perfect regulation. Admirers came, as a matter of course, and among them were Lincoln and the man against whom he had already been most frequently pitted as an adversary, both in the Legislature and upon the stump. The best

definition of the contrast between the characters of Stephen A. Douglas and his almost life-long rival may possibly be contained in the two terms "statesman" and "politician" as these are commonly understood. The statesmanship of Lincoln included all that can be conveyed by the word politician, while the political sagacity and undeniable power of Douglas failed at the line where unselfish devotion to principle opens human genius for wider development and higher uses. They were in striking contrast, personally, and Douglas possessed an apparent advantage in ease of manners and in that trained acquaintance with polished society which had been denied to Lincoln.

One of the anecdotes which in after years came floating down the stream of Springfield gossip tells that one day a merry friend asked Miss Todd which of this pair of her admirers she preferred, and that she replied, "The one that has the best chance of becoming President of the United States." It was merely a conversational parry, but what seemed a chattering absurdity then took on a different semblance only a few years later.

All things were prospering with Lincoln in the year 1840, and his courtship among the rest, for before the great Whig victory was declared he had been promised the hand of Mary Todd. He had but recently wiped away the last of his old liabilities and was still poor, but his growing law practice promised to justify him in undertaking, at no distant day, the responsibilities of wedded life. He had been once more elected a member of the Legis-

lature, but the Assembly chamber was now in the near neighborhood of his law office, and neither his public nor his professional duties could interfere with his visits at the hospitable home of Ninian Edwards.

There seemed hardly any possibility of external interference, for Miss Todd had made up her own mind unchangeably, and yet trouble came. It arose in the mind and conscience of Mr. Lincoln himself, and a strange kind of emotional storm came with it. Allied to his keen sense of personal honor and rigid integrity of purpose, a habit of searching self-examination had grown with his growth. It did not trouble him much with reference to the ordinary affairs of life, but it was aroused excessively by his present and prospective relations to Mary Todd. Not his most intimate friend, not he himself, could have given a correct statement and analysis of the mental operations which led him first to doubt the reality of the love he was offering or could offer, and which then threw him into a fit of melancholy so profound as to amount to temporary aberration of mind, unfitting him for business or society. Miss Todd herself, with a feminine keenness and truthfulness which did her honor, understood his troubles too well to accept his morbid offer of release from the engagement. His friend—his best friend—Joshua F. Speed, with very practical wisdom, took him away to Kentucky for a few weeks of mental repose, and that was the end of it. Speed himself fell in love and needed a friend, and Lincoln recovered his own health of mind in acting as heart counsel in that case. An intensely interesting corre-



spondence has been preserved, illustrating the processes through which the two men passed in getting into good order again. ' .

Mr. Speed married happily, and Mr. Lincoln was once more fit for law, politics, and society.

Miss Todd's feelings and purposes had undergone no change, and her spirits were as high and her wit as biting as ever. Among the rising young men of Springfield at that time was a peppery Irishman named James Shields. He was an active Democratic politician, and held the post of State Auditor.

In later years something like distinction came to him as a general in the army and a Senator in Congress, but neither his military nor legislative capacity was at all above mediocrity. His shortcomings as auditor, then manifest, were humorously set forth, in August, 1841, in a letter printed in the *Springfield Journal*, purporting to come from the last townships, and signed "Rebecca." This was afterward discovered to have been written by Lincoln himself, but it was soon followed by others, as merciless in their satire, from a different hand employing the same cover. The vanity of Shields took fire, and he called upon the editor of the *Journal* to disclose the name of the author. Mary Todd's name could not be surrendered, and only that of Abraham Lincoln was given. The angry auditor at once took so vehement a course as to prevent any apology for the first letter of Rebecca, and no explanation of the others was possible. The entire West was then under the heathenish domination of what was grotesquely called the Code of

Honor, and although Lincoln hated it he felt bound by it. That is, when Shields insisted upon fighting a duel, as a consequence of "Rebecca's" satires, Lincoln consented, and chose for weapons "cavalry broadswords of the largest size." The meeting was arranged by seconds, and was to take place on the western shore of the Mississippi River. The combatants were to face each other across a board, from which neither was to retreat more than six feet. Shields was never to know precisely how he would feel at being hacked at by such a scythe in such an iron hand, for there was an interference, in regular order, before any harm was done. The whole absurd affair ended with what was accepted as a satisfactory explanation, and perhaps good came out of it. No other challenge was ever sent to Abraham Lincoln, and any cloud between him and Mary Todd seems to have entirely disappeared.

There was another year of waiting, until all pecuniary obstacles were forever out of the way, and then, on November 4th, 1842, the clerk of the county of Sangamon was called upon for a marriage license, "according to the usual custom and law of the State of Illinois," as it declared upon its face. The newly wedded pair did not at once set up house-keeping, but took rooms at the Globe Tavern, at four dollars a week. It was a good price to pay, and Lincoln was an uncommonly bad hand at collecting even his law fees; but his finances were thenceforward to be in better keeping than his own. That in all his after years he accumulated anything was due to Mrs. Lincoln and to his friend Judge David Davis.

## CHAPTER XI.

*An Honest Plea—A Whig Leader—Extending the National Area—The Mexican War—The Wilmot Proviso—A New Political Era.*

MR. LINCOLN had been admitted to practice in the Circuit Court of the United States on December 3d, 1839, and business of a better and more profitable grade than formerly was coming to him as his professional capacities earned recognition. The character and name he was winning finds a capital illustration in his first plea before that court. He arose when his case was called, and said :

“ This is the first case I have ever had in this court, and I have therefore examined it with great care. As the court will perceive by looking at the abstract of the record, the only question in this case is one of authority. I have not been able to find any authority sustaining my side of the case, but I have found several cases directly in point on the other side. I will now give these cases and then submit the case.”

Ready always to give a client the utmost help in his power within the boundaries of law and right, he was almost powerless unless these were manifestly with him. No tempting retainer could induce him to become the agent of injustice or oppression, and any statement made by him came soon to have the weight of testimony with the bench and the jury. His friend and biographer, Lamon, tells

of one criminal for whom, after taking up the case, Lincoln refused to appear, remarking to his associates: "If you can say anything for him, do it. I can't; if I attempt, the jury will see that I think he is guilty and convict him, of course."

The general public had known no more of his fit of melancholy than that he had been half sick with something or other—maybe it was chills—for a while. General Shields and his seconds took care, after a most ridiculous and wordy fashion, to bring all the laugh about the broadsword duel upon themselves, and it did the challenged man no harm whatever. By his marriage with Mary Todd he had become settled in life and had been admitted more fully than before as a member of the very peculiar social and political clique which clustered around the State Capitol, and which held in its hands the control of both parties in Illinois during almost a generation. There are subtle gradations in such matters, and the rise of Lincoln had been very rapid. The Whig Party contained a number of able and brilliant men, but in 1841-42, when searching for an available candidate for governor, so much was said about Lincoln that it was necessary for him to publish the personal and professional reasons why he would not take the nomination or the office itself. He preferred the unobtrusive place of hard work which he held as a managing member of the State Central Committee. In 1843-44 he would willingly have received the district nomination for Congressman, but there were several other Whig politicians eagerly grasping for it, and General

John J. Hardin, of Morgan County, won the prize. Mr. Lincoln's party rank was pointedly acknowledged, nevertheless, by his being once more named as Presidential elector, intrusted more than any other man with the State canvass.

Since the first election of George Washington, no Presidential election has exceeded in importance that of 1844, of which its one equal, that of 1860, was a direct consequence. The platforms of the Whig and Democratic parties set forth in due form the opposite views of the tariff, national bank, internal improvement, and other questions over which previous contests had been waged, but all of these were subordinated to another and greater issue.

The ordinance of 1787, shutting out slavery from the great Northwestern Territory, was supposed to have shut out the slavery question from American politics. It did not break in, offensively, until Missouri presented herself for admission as a slave State, and then the Missouri Compromise of 1820, under which she was admitted, was confidently declared to have once more shut out the black peril forever.

As the years went by, American emigrants, many of them carrying slaves with them, contrary to Mexican law, poured steadily into the imperfectly defined Mexican territory known as Texas. They did so with a well-understood purpose of wresting the entire region from the weak hands of the disordered semi-republic which nominally owned it. They intended, from the first, to set up for themselves as soon as they should become strong enough,

and then to add all that land and more to the United States for proper division into slave-holding commonwealths. Up to a certain line they succeeded admirably. They built up a new State, declared its independence, drove out Mexican armies after much heroic fighting, few against many, and all the while they were openly sympathized with and aided by the States-Rights faction of the Democratic Party, and by not a few old-time Whigs who were in favor of the territorial expansion of the Republic. There were, on the other hand, men who, like John Quincy Adams, at first favored expansion, and then who opposed it on discovering that it included the indefinite extension of the area of slavery.

In the Presidential campaign of 1840 neither of the parties was required to take any position with reference to the annexation of Texas. It was understood that an important faction of the Democratic Party opposed it as involving a war with Mexico, and President Martin Van Buren had formulated this objection in his official response to a Texan envoy. Whigs like Daniel Webster were, on the other hand, believed, perhaps erroneously, to favor such a territorial extension.

The administration of President Tyler, ceasing to be Whig at all, took upon itself the work of preparing the way for annexation, and the Whig Party in Congress fought against it as an Administration measure.

There had been a nominal equality preserved in the number of free and slave States, respectively, securing equal votes upon any sectional division in

the United States Senate, but upon any question affecting slavery the equilibrium vanished, for that body did not contain a corporal's guard of Northern men confessing positive anti-slavery sentiments.

The House of Representatives, however, with a membership based upon population, was yearly becoming more and more prophetic of political peril, so far as any equality of the sections might be concerned. Pro-slavery advocates were fairly justified in declaring that the free States threatened shortly to control the purse and power of the nation absolutely.

The South was in a minority, and it must have more States, or there was no telling what might come to pass.

Slowly at first, and then with an increasing enthusiasm, the Democratic Party declared itself the champion of the annexation of Texas, and in like manner the Whig Party argued itself into a determined opposition of that measure. Both parties for a while refused to acknowledge that the real question placed before the people was this: "Shall Texas and all the land west of it to the Pacific be annexed, stolen, or purchased, and shall the question of its future condition as free or slave territory come with it? Shall we or shall we not provide in this way for the ultimate abolition of human bondage in the United States?"

The Democrats nominated James K. Polk, of Tennessee, and George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, with a vigorous annexation platform. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay, of Kentucky, and Theodore Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, upon a platform de-

nouncing the annexation of a war with Mexico. Mr. Polk had previously been a warm defender of a claim—existing from the days of French and Spanish occupancy of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and from treaties made with those powers by the United States—that the region called Texas, if its boundaries could be discovered, had never been fairly Mexican, but had almost, if not quite, been American land. Mr. Clay had eloquently opposed this theory, and all the Whig stump orators and journalists now followed his leadership. Mr. Lincoln distinguished himself by the fervor and force of the speeches which he made before great Whig mass meetings in Illinois and Indiana. One of these was made at Gentryville, a short walk only from the log cabin where he had lived in his boyhood. Half way in his speech he stopped short to get down and shoulder his way through the crowd for a hand-shake with Nat Grigsby, brother of the Aaron Grigsby who married Sally Lincoln. Something very marvelous appears the change which had taken place in one of the men whose hands were meeting, but the other had not risen from the level upon which he had been born.

There were Democratic advocates who declared that the future agitation of the slavery question could only be prevented by increasing the political strength of the South.

There were Whig advocates who plainly saw and declared that the annexation of Texas would open a wide gate for the admission of dangerous questions relating to slavery.



Both parties avowed their horror of agitation, and both pleaded so well that the nation found a choice between them somewhat difficult. Mr. Polk received only thirty-eight thousand one hundred and seventy-five more votes than did Mr. Clay, but he had one hundred and seventy electors against only one hundred and five obtained by Mr. Clay. If, however, the thirty-six votes of the State of New York had been taken from Mr. Polk and given to Mr. Clay, the result would have been reversed. So it would have been but for the blind wisdom of the extreme Abolitionist Whigs of New York, aided by a few Free-soil Democrats. They nominated a candidate of their own, Mr. James G. Birney, gave him over sixty-two thousand votes, and enabled Mr. Polk to carry New York. By their action, therefore, the Texas gate was thrown wide open for the admission of the slavery question, and a joint effort of the Whig and Democratic parties to shut it again, in 1850, failed miserably.

The last act of the Tyler Administration and of its now triumphant supporters in Congress was the passage of the bill providing for the admission of Texas as a State of the Union, to be subdivided into four States as rapidly as its expected increase in population might permit. The inauguration of President James K. Polk, March 4th, 1845, was accompanied and followed by angry declarations on the part of Mexico that the annexation of Texas would be regarded by her as an act of open hostility and a sufficient cause of war. The Texan Congress expressed its formal assent to the act of an-

nexation June 18th, 1845, and summoned a convention of the people, which unanimously ratified and confirmed the annexation treaty, transferring to the United States whatever rights the short-lived Republic of Texas might possess to any lands which American politicians could claim or American armies could occupy.

The latter were in almost feverishly energetic preparation from the day in which President Polk named his Cabinet, and a force under General Taylor was gathered within a few miles of the Texas border in the Spring of 1845. It remained there, as an army of observation, until December, 1845, when it was re-enforced and transferred to Corpus Christi, at the mouth of the Nueces River, on the coast of Texas, to serve as a notification to Mexico that the main question remaining to be settled between the two nations was one of a boundary line. That also was decided upon at Washington before the Spring of 1846, and in April the army, under General Taylor, advanced to the Rio Grande, while other American forces proceeded to seize and occupy the remaining territory, New Mexico and California, which, with intervening wastes and mountains, the party of territorial expansion and slavery extension had determined to acquire for the United States. It was bold and vigorous statesmanship, which the Whig orators and writers characterized freely by much less pleasant and even more sonorous epithets. Mexico lost nothing of which she was making or could make any use. The slavery extensionists gained nothing. The best interests were served of

all the human beings affected, omitting any sufferers by the direct operation of the war. The questions of right and wrong between Mexico and the United States were about as nearly balanced as were the votes of the Whig and Democratic parties of 1844, and speedily ceased to be more than matters of historical inquiry.

The Birney abolitionists were not the only Northern politicians who took ground openly in 1844 upon the subject of slavery extension. The course of events was watched by a large and intelligent body of men, who but waited a suitable opportunity for action. One was given them by President Polk in August, 1846. The successes won by General Taylor and the apparently helpless condition of Mexico encouraged him to prepare at once for the peace negotiations and the land purchases which he hoped might soon be within his grasp. He asked Congress for authority and for money, and both were voted to him by the House of Representatives, but the act appropriating thirty thousand dollars for expenses and three millions to use as the President might see fit was accompanied by the startling announcement that the great plan for manufacturing new slave States beyond the boundaries of Texas itself had failed. On the motion of a Pennsylvania Whig, named David Wilmot, after consultation with other members of his own party, the following proviso was added to the bill :

*“ Provided, That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico, by the United States, by virtue of any treaty that may be negotiated*

between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said Territory, except for crime whereof the party shall be duly convicted."

The already existing Mexican law prohibited slavery in all the domain of that Republic, and the great mass of the Whig Party, re-enforced by a strong detachment of Free-soil Democrats, came into line behind the Wilmot Proviso with a round assertion that the Constitution of the United States did not contain any provision overruling that old law. Whatever else was afterward done or not done with the Wilmot Proviso itself was of little consequence after fully half of the nation had declared some kind of assent to the idea and doctrine which it contained, and a new era opened in American politics.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Law Partnerships—Lincoln in Congress—Dealings with the Mexican War—The Presidential Campaign of 1848—Stumping New England—A Whig Victory.*

MR. LINCOLN'S first law partner, John T. Stuart, was more a politician than a lawyer. The firm carried altogether too heavy a load of unprofitable public business, and the partnership ceased in 1841, with Mr. Stuart's election to Congress. Hon. Stephen T. Logan, with whom Mr. Lincoln then became associated, was also a man of influence in his party and ambitious of political honors, and was an exceptionally able lawyer. This second partnership lasted until 1845, and upon its termination a third was formed, which was much more than a mere business connection. In the fullest sense of the word, Hon. William H. Herndon was Lincoln's friend, and the intimate relations between them ceased only at the death of the senior partner.

Hardly was the new firm well under way, however, before Mr. Lincoln's public duties came in to interfere seriously with its prosperity. There were clients of all sorts eager to secure the services of Mr. Lincoln. He had now faithfully followed the court from county to county of the Eighth Judicial District, year after year, until no other lawyer on

the circuit was better known. He had begun with a borrowed horse and with barely money enough in his pocket to pay his way, but his finances were in better condition now. The more profitable part of his practice, however, required his personal presence before courts and juries. He could not transfer to Mr. Herndon the confidence which other men had imbibed in his own ability to win their cases for them. When, therefore, on May 1st, 1846, the Whig District Convention met and selected Mr. Lincoln as its candidate for Congress, it placed a serious question before him. He had long wished to go to Congress. It had even been said by his enemies that there was a standing contract between Hardin, Baker, Lincoln, and Logan, the four Whig chiefs of Sangamon County, that they should each have a term in succession. Hardin's term came in 1842, Baker's in 1844, and now Judge Logan himself moved Lincoln's nomination before the convention, and no other name was proposed. It had been well understood that he would accept, and the Democratic Convention prepared for him an uncommonly sharp and interesting canvass. They nominated the well-known and popular Methodist preacher, Peter Cartwright, accused Mr. Lincoln of being an inîdel, a duellist, and otherwise unfit to receive the suffrages of good men, adding every possible argument to be deduced from the fact that he was a Whig, opposed to the war with Mexico. There was less to be gained from that field, owing to the fact that the army was led by Whig generals and that two of the regiments of Illinois volunteers

were commanded by Sangamon County Whigs, Colonel Baker and Colonel Hardin. Peter Cartwright was an enthusiastic Democrat, but there were many intelligent men in that party who were disposed to believe that his best public services could be performed in pulpits and camp meetings, rather than in the House of Representatives. They, therefore, voted for Mr. Lincoln at the August election, giving him a majority in the district of fifteen hundred and eleven, and in the county of six hundred and ninety. It was the best Whig victory ever won in Illinois.

The successful candidate had something more than a law practice to leave behind him. His first son, Robert Todd Lincoln, born in the old Globe Tavern, was now beginning to run around and talk, and William, his second, was born in March, 1847. During the remainder of the season, however, he put his business and home affairs in order, and was ready to set out for Washington, to be present at the organization of the Thirtieth Congress, on December 6th, 1847.

Both the House and Senate contained a large number of very capable men, each party being thoroughly organized and well led. If any distinction came to Mr. Lincoln from the fact that he was the only Whig member from the State of Illinois, there was also something depressing in it, and a new member cannot at once acquire influence or prominence. He may have been enabled to discern more clearly than before the difference between a merely local and a national reputation. He was

assigned a position in the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, as if to indicate that as yet the great leaders of his party knew little about him and did not expect much from him. He took hold of his committee work with his accustomed industry, but he had not come to be a silent member, and he was heard from at an early day. His letters to Mr. Herndon and others show that his first experiences and observations did not increase his ambition for a prolonged career in Congress. To Mr. Speed he wrote: "Being elected to Congress, though I am very grateful to our friends for having done it, has not pleased me so much as I expected." He was a born leader of men, long accustomed to special prominence in Illinois politics, and it may have been irksome to find all present leadership in Congress so firmly held by other hands.

The questions of the future were taking form more rapidly than the masses of the people were aware. The question of the immediate present was the conduct of the war with Mexico, including the orders of President Polk to General Taylor to occupy the disputed territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande.

The correspondence between the general and the Secretary of War supplied the Opposition with abundant texts for criticism, and every point was made the most of. The President's Message at the opening of Congress had set forth the position and claims of the Democratic Party and the Administration with unflinching clearness, and it was well understood that the entire Whig body was ready to



vote supplies and raise troops. They were even willing to acquire new territory, if something like the Wilmot Proviso could be created as a protection for the old Mexican law prohibiting slavery. The Proviso itself, after passing the House with much difficulty, had failed in the Senate, dragging down with it the particular bill to which it was attached. No similar measure was now before the House. On December 22d, 1847, Mr. Lincoln introduced a series of resolutions of no great effect or importance by themselves, but which very well illustrate the Whig position. They were as follows :

“ *Resolved*, by the House of Representatives : That the President of the United States be respectfully requested to inform this House :

“ First : Whether the spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed, as in his Message declared, was or was not within the territory of Spain, at least after the treaty of 1819, until the Mexican revolution.

“ Second : Whether that spot is or is not within the territory which was wrested from Spain by the revolutionary Government of Mexico.

“ Third : Whether that spot is or is not within a settlement of people, which settlement has existed ever since long before the Texas revolution and until its inhabitants fled before the approach of the United States army.

“ Fourth : Whether that spot is or is not isolated from any and all other settlements by the Gulf and the Rio Grande on the south and west and by wide uninhabited regions on the north and east.

“ Fifth : Whether the people of that settlement, or a majority of them, or any of them, have ever submitted themselves to the Government or laws of Texas or of the United States, by consent or by compulsion, either by accepting office, or voting at elections, or paying tax, or serving on juries, or having process served upon them, or in any other way.

“ Sixth : Whether the people of that settlement did or did not flee from the approach of the United States army, leaving unpro-

tected their homes and their growing crops, *before* the blood was shed, as in the messages stated ; and whether the first blood so shed was or was not shed within the enclosure of one of the people who had thus fled from it.

“ Seventh : Whether our citizens whose blood was shed, as in his Message declared, were or were not at that time armed officers and soldiers, sent into that settlement by order of the President through the Secretary of War.

“ Eighth : Whether the military force of the United States was or was not so sent into that settlement after General Taylor had more than once intimated to the War Department that in his opinion no such movement was necessary to the defence or protection of Texas.”

No final action was ever taken by the House upon these resolutions, nor was any such action expected by Mr. Lincoln. They were presented as a means of obtaining an opportunity for addressing the House, in Committee of the Whole, upon the entire subject of the Mexican War and its conduct. The speech he made January 12th, 1848, was admitted to be of marked ability, and would doubtless have done more for the reputation of the new member from Illinois if it had not been that Congress and the country were at that time enduring an excessive outpouring of fervid and powerful oratory. There were altogether too many good speeches. At the same time, there were members of Lincoln's own constituents, even of his personal friends, including Mr. Herndon, whose ardent patriotism and martial feeling prevented them from quite appreciating an argument against the justice of the war from a man who at the same time favored its vigorous prosecution as the shortest road to an honorable peace. They should have read the letters of Gen-

eral Taylor, as an appendix to Lincoln's speech. As it was, the latter found himself placed upon the defensive unpleasantly and that his home popularity had received a serious blow. His position in Congress was somewhat advanced by it, and his tall form was sure of better recognition afterward. His stature had, indeed, something to do with the fact that he was a marked man, but one of his first and closest friendships among his fellow-Congressmen was with Alexander Stephens, of Georgia, the lightest weight, physically, of the House of Representatives.

The real value of eloquent speeches on the floor of Congress was their effect upon the people in preparing their minds for the Presidential campaign of 1848.

Parties had been nearly balanced in 1844, and although the Whigs had now very manifestly the best of the argument, they had a somewhat difficult political problem before them. President Polk was not to be a candidate for re-election, and the Democracy possessed no available military hero, but they represented the war and its glory, and seemed to be almost certain of electing whomsoever they might nominate. A very large part of the Whig Party failed to perceive this point of policy, and proposed a renomination of Henry Clay, as the most perfect representative of Whig principles. A smaller element was eager to try the experiment of nominating Daniel Webster. A pretty strong faction, suspected of anti-slavery leaning, was in favor of General Scott. Mr. Lincoln and a number of the wiser

Whig leaders, sure of carrying their point by the very active work they were doing, clearly saw and declared that the Whig Party must itself represent the war and its glory, while avoiding the slavery question for the present. That meant the nomination of General Taylor, with whom some of them had been corresponding upon that subject ever since he made his first camp at Matamoras, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande.

General Taylor was no politician, and there were those who denied that he was a trustworthy Whig, even after he had made a sufficiently plain written declaration of his principles. He was, however, the only candidate with whom that party had any prospect of success, and so it wisely nominated, so to speak, the battle of Buena Vista. Mr. Lincoln's activity with reference to General Taylor's candidacy, and the manner in which his Illinois friends had misinterpreted his position, made it every way desirable that he should take some opportunity for a public explanation. He found one before the close of the session, and the speech he made in Congress was well calculated to soothe any irritation against him among the Whigs of Sangamon County and elsewhere in Illinois. He said to his opponents :

“ As General Taylor is *par excellence* the hero of the Mexican War, and you Democrats say we Whigs have always opposed the war, you think it must be very awkward and embarrassing for us to go for General Taylor. The declaration that we have always opposed the war is true or false according as one may understand the term ‘opposing the war.’ If to say ‘the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President’

be opposing the war, then the Whigs have very generally opposed it. Whenever they have spoken at all they have said this ; and they have said it on what has appeared good reasons to them. The marching of an army into a peaceful Mexican settlement, frightening the inhabitants away, leaving their growing crops and other property to destruction, to *you* may appear a perfectly amiable, peaceable, unprovoking procedure ; but it does not so appear to *us*. So to call such an act, to us appears a naked, impudent absurdity, and we speak of it accordingly. But if when the war had begun and had become the cause of the country, the giving of our money and our blood, in common with yours, was support of the war, then it is not true that we have always opposed the war. With few individual exceptions, you have always had our votes here for all the necessary supplies. And, more than this, you have had the services, the blood, and the lives of our political brethren in every trial and on every field. The beardless boy and the mature man, the humble and the distinguished—you have had them. Through suffering and death, by disease and in battle, they have endured and fought and fallen with you. Clay and Webster each gave a son, never to be returned. From the State of my own residence, besides other worthy but less known Whig names, we sent Marshall, Morrison, Baker, and Hardin ; they all fought and one fell, and in the fall of that one we lost our best Whig man. Nor were the Whigs few in number or laggard in the day of battle. In that fearful, bloody, breathless struggle at Buena Vista, where each man's hard task was to beat back five foes or to die himself, of the five high officers who perished, four were Whigs."

When the Whig Convention assembled at Philadelphia June 7th, 1848, Mr. Lincoln being one of its members, the nomination of General Taylor had already been assured. Only four ballots were required to dispose of the other candidates.

Millard Fillmore, of New York, well known to hold exceedingly conservative views upon the slavery question, was named for Vice-President. The issues of the political campaign were narrowed so that neither the Whigs nor Democrats seemed to

confess any interest in the future. The Democratic candidates, Cass and Butler, were as conservative as Mr. Fillmore himself. It is true that throughout the North candidates for Congress found themselves compelled to evade or to answer disagreeable questions relating to the Wilmot Proviso and slavery extension, but the Whig Party, as a whole, disclaimed responsibility for anything but the defeat of Santa Anna. The Democratic Party, at its National Convention and afterward, said and did just enough to enable Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams to rally the New York Free-soilers, run an independent ticket, and so turn over the electoral votes of that State to General Taylor and elect him. Without them he would have been defeated. With their associates in other States and the Wilmot Proviso Whigs, they formed the nucleus of what became, only a few years later, the Republican Party east of the Alleghany Mountains.

Mr. Lincoln entered the Presidential canvass with energy. On June 20th he addressed the House upon the subject of internal improvements, and he made his first campaign speech upon the floor of Congress, July 27th, 1848, before setting out upon an electioneering tour of New York and New England. When at Albany he formed slight acquaintances with Millard Fillmore and Thurlow Weed. Both were to be remarkably renewed in later years. Up to that time Mr. Lincoln's acquaintance with the people of the Middle and Eastern States had been made only through their emigrants to the West, and he now had an opportunity for studying

them at home. Before the campaign was over he was again in Illinois, adding materially to his reputation as a speaker, but no amount of Whig eloquence could prevent the vote of that State from being given to Cass and Butler.

The second session of the Thirtieth Congress began in December, 1848. There had been some changes in its membership, and more were indicated, but the greatest change of all made itself manifest because the campaign was over. The Mexican War and its management no longer furnished a cloak for the real issue over which the old parties were to break in pieces and new parties were to form. The question of slavery extension came to the front at once, with the first legislative effort to provide for the organization of the vast territories acquired from Mexico by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the return of peace. The session was to terminate on March 4th following, and there was little possibility of doing more than open the way for the great debates and measures, the compromises of 1850 included, which were to make the succeeding Congress memorable in American political history. How distinctly Mr. Lincoln marked his position among anti-slavery men may be gathered from the facts that at the close of his term he was recorded as having voted forty-two times for the Wilmot Proviso, as it appeared and reappeared, and that early in January, 1849, he prepared and presented a bill for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Beginning Anew—A Tempting Offer—The Old Circuit Once More—Death of Thomas Lincoln—Standing of Mr. Lincoln at the Bar—The Abolitionists.*

LETTERS written by Mr. Lincoln during his term in Congress deal very little with men and affairs around him in Washington. He kept no diary, and he was not yet of sufficient mark for other men to record the occurrences of his daily life. It is evident that he found his separation from home wearisome. He was conscious that as yet he had no great work upon his hands and that he was somehow out of place. Nevertheless, as the end drew near, it became necessary to look forward and decide upon his future course in life. He did not too strongly desire a second term, and there was good reason to expect defeat at the polls in case he should obtain a nomination. The Democratic Party was everywhere recovering from its reactionary defeat in 1848, and was beginning to take upon itself a new character. Both at the North and at the South it was absorbing more and more of the multitudes who instinctively shrink from changes, and to whom there is a semblance of evil in any assault upon a solid, time-honored institution, such, for instance, as the Constitutional right of slave owners to own slaves. The right to own them anywhere in the



United States, without reference to State or territorial line, was apparently the only point seriously disputed, and there seemed to be a swift increase in the number of men who were even willing to concede this for the sake of peace. It was not yet so plain that the men who refused to concede it were strengthening their numbers and their convictions and were preparing their courage to say that it was sometimes better to be just than to be at peace.

If Mr. Lincoln's course with reference to the war and to the ideas represented by the Wilmot Proviso had not been in the way of a renomination, the custom of his district, if not almost of his party, was against him. Rotation in office was almost an accepted doctrine, as if a seat in Congress were a kind of prize to be awarded rather than a public service for which the best and most experienced men should be carefully selected. The Whig nomination was, therefore, given to Judge Logan, and he was defeated at the polls, as Lincoln probably would have been.

The law practice and professional connections of the latter had drifted away from him during his term in Congress. He had not nominally separated from Mr. Herndon, but it looked very much as if he were about to begin life anew. His party services and rank entitled him to ask something of a Whig Administration, and there was one appointment which seemed to open a field peculiarly suited to a born frontiersman. It was that of Commissioner of the General Land Office, and Lincoln had applied for it at the suggestion of many personal

friends. His claim was so manifestly good that the Taylor Administration, deciding against him and in favor of another citizen of Illinois, offered him instead the post of Territorial Governor of Oregon. There was a momentary temptation in the suggestion of so important a field of usefulness. It seemed to promise present support, future prosperity, a share in the development of a new commonwealth, and shortly a seat in the Senate of the United States. At the same time, it implied a complete abandonment of all hope for any other career. He said, on receiving the offer, that he would accept it if Mrs. Lincoln would consent, and the whole matter was referred to her ; but she did not require any time for deliberation. She promptly declared that she would not permit her husband to go and bury himself in the wilderness of Oregon, and there the proposal died.

Politics and office seeking having been definitely put aside, Mr. Lincoln turned to his profession with greater devotion than ever before. He refused to open an office in Chicago, on the ground that city practice required an amount of office work and close confinement which his habits unfitted him for. It would destroy his health, he said, and he wisely returned to the migratory work with which he had so long been familiar. He was at no time what is termed an office lawyer, the duties so indicated being turned over, as a rule, to his partner or to his associate counsel. The Eighth Judicial District contained fourteen wide-acred prairie counties, and each of these, in turn, received a visit from Mr.

Lincoln twice a year, nearly half of his time being consumed by his absences upon the circuit. At every county seat there was a circle of professional and other friends ready to welcome him, to listen eagerly for any remark he might make upon current events, and particularly to catch and repeat the little story with which he was pretty sure to point and illustrate his remarks. He took a personal interest in every case placed in his hands, thoroughly enjoying its management, and seeming to care more for the contest itself than for any fee he might earn by it. In fact, his inability to charge and collect fees was still one of his weak points.

The six years beginning in 1849 and ending in 1855 were in many respects the brightest part of Mr. Lincoln's life. The rebuilding of his law practice more than took care of itself, so eagerly did men seek his services, especially as a counsel for the defendant. His home, when he could be in it, was all that his simple tastes required, and Mrs. Lincoln was constantly devising improvements with which to surprise him on returning from his professional absences. She was given to hospitality, and so was he, and those who sat down at his table were apt to say something afterward about the excellence of the abundant provision, as well as the cordiality with which they had been entertained.

One son, Edwards, had died in infancy, but in 1850 a fourth, Thomas, afterward so well known as "little Tad," came to complete the home circle. It was as if hardly anything remained to be asked for, as success in life, by a man who had begun as a

day laborer and who had risen without help of any kind other than such as he won for himself. His early associations had almost faded out of sight, only the brightest of them, his noble-hearted step-mother, remaining at the close of the year 1850. When informed, in the Autumn of that year, that his father's health was failing, there were sufficient reasons why Mr. Lincoln could not pay an immediate visit to Coles County. Year after year he had contributed with prudent liberality to the support of a man who could not win a support for himself from the best of Illinois land, and he now wrote to his stepbrother, John Johnston, a letter which has been preserved. He said in it :

" I sincerely hope father may yet recover his health ; but at all events tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs of our heads ; and he will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that, if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant ; but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyful meeting with loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the mercy of God, hope ere long to join them."

There was no recovery, and Thomas Lincoln passed away. After his death, Mrs. Lincoln's old age was made continually comfortable by the loving care of her stepson. He visited her more than once, and she was able to say, at the end of his career—for she survived him—that she could not ask for a son more dutiful than he had been.

The surpassing eminence attained by Abraham Lincoln as a politician and statesman has even

served to belittle in the minds of many whatever reputation he won in the ways open to other men. There are even now those who speak of him as a "country lawyer" up to the time when his second series of political successes began to come to him.

The first series, beginning with his election to the Legislature and ending with his Presidential-electoral nominations and his career in Congress, was sufficiently remarkable, but it would not have provided him with a solid foundation of name and character to sustain him in his further and greater undertakings, if to mere party leadership he had not added eminence in his profession. What was his rank at the bar and how he was regarded by other lawyers, as well as by the general public who knew him, cannot better be expressed than in the written testimonies of the very judges before whom he argued and fairly won his cases, or fairly lost them, year after year.

Hon. David Davis, afterward of the United States Supreme Court, presided over the Eighth Judicial District during all the years of Lincoln's later practice. He wrote after the death of his friend :

"In all the elements that constitute the great lawyer, he [Mr. Lincoln] had few equals. He was great both at *nisi prius* and before an appellate tribunal. He seized the strong points of a case and presented them with clearness and great compactness. His mind was logical and direct, and he did not indulge in extraneous discussion. Generalities and platitudes had no charms for him. An unfailing vein of humor never deserted him, and he was able to claim the attention of court and jury, when the cause was the most uninteresting, by the appropriateness of his anecdotes.

"His power of comparison was large, and he rarely failed, in a legal discussion, to employ that mode of reasoning. The framework of his mental and moral being was honesty, and a wrong cause was poorly defended by him. The ability which some eminent lawyers possess, of explaining away the bad points of a cause, by ingenious sophistry, was denied him. In order to bring into full activity his great powers, it was necessary that he should be convinced of the right and justice of the matter which he advocated. When so convinced, whether the cause was great or small, he was usually successful. He read law books but little, except when the cause in hand made it necessary ; yet he was usually self-reliant, depending on his own resources, and rarely consulting his brother lawyers, either on the management of his case or on the legal questions involved.

"Mr. Lincoln was the fairest and most accommodating of practitioners, granting all favors which were consistent with his duty to his client, and rarely availing himself of an unwary oversight of his adversary.

"He hated wrong and oppression, everywhere, and many a man whose fraudulent conduct was undergoing review in a court of justice has writhed under his terrific indignation and rebukes."

Judge Drummond, United States District Judge for Illinois, has given his thoughtful estimate as follows :

"With a probity of character known to all, with an intuitive insight into the human heart, with a clearness of statement which was in itself an argument, with uncommon power and felicity of illustration—often, it is true, of a plain and homely kind—and with that sincerity and earnestness of manner which carried conviction, he was, perhaps, one of the most successful jury lawyers we ever had in the State. He always tried a case fairly and honestly. He never intentionally misrepresented the evidence of a witness nor the argument of an opponent. He met both squarely, and if he could not explain the one or answer the other, substantially admitted it. He never misstated the law, according to his own intelligent view of it. Such was the transparent candor and integrity of his nature, that he could not well or strongly argue a

side or cause that he thought wrong. . . . He could hardly be called very learned in his profession, and yet he rarely tried a cause without fully understanding the law applicable to it ; and I have no hesitation in saying he was one of the ablest lawyers I have ever known."

Equally emphatic is the remainder of their testimony and that of other able jurists. With one accord they delineate a lawyer who was so born as well as so made, and explain the mental peculiarities which enabled a barefooted, log-cabin boy to become so deeply interested in reading the Revised Statutes of Indiana.

It is recorded of Mr. Lincoln, as one of the noteworthy characteristics of this period of busy practice, that the abolitionists could at any time apply to him for legal help in cases arising out of the Fugitive Slave Law, or otherwise affecting the rights of colored people. Other eminent lawyers declined a kind of practice so full of peril to their political ambitions. Lincoln did not yet know that he was himself an abolitionist, but he could not shut his heart to the appeal of an oppressed human being, black or white.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Compromises of 1850—The Breakdown of the Whig Party—Lincoln and Politics—The Pierce Administration—Eulogy on Henry Clay—The Kansas-Nebraska Bill.*

WHEN Abraham Lincoln's Congressional term ended, March 3d, 1849, it looked as if he had turned away from politics. He even said so himself, and there was certainly no apparent prospect for political honors in Illinois for a Whig who was more than suspected of holding heretical opinions upon the subject of slavery. He was personally as popular as ever, but it seemed manifest to all men that his future career lay among courts and law cases.

The great field of national politics was undergoing a process of transformation and of preparation, and over it hung a deepening cloud which contained a greater storm than most men were willing to believe. The year 1850 witnessed the death of President Taylor, the accession of President Fillmore, and the nominal accord of the Whig and Democratic parties upon the compromise measures which seemed to give the slave power so much, but which really gave it nothing. Hardly were these adopted before the more acute Southern leaders discovered that, while they had lost all the newly acquired territory except Texas, the best part of



the price they obtained for it, the Fugitive Slave Law, was of no value, except as a powerful agency for stirring up anti-slavery feeling at the North. It was the most tremendous weapon which could have been placed in the hands of the extreme abolitionists, and they were everywhere making the most of it.

How Mr. Lincoln felt with reference to the great political movement which he was watching, but in which he seemed destined to take no part, may be understood from conversations which have been recorded. His old and intimate friend, Judge Stuart, relates that, in the year 1850, he and Lincoln were discussing the course of legislation in Washington.

"The time will come," said Lincoln, "when we must all be Democrats or abolitionists. When that time comes my mind is made up. The slavery question cannot be compromised."

What he evidently meant was that even by the current compact between the parties the great issue had been merely postponed, and that the day of final settlement must surely come. Judge Stuart replied that his mind also was made up, and intimated that it was not in favor of abolition. They were perfect types of the two wings of the old Whig Party.

Mr. Herndon's testimony presents a much more vivid picture of the mental processes through which his law partner was advancing toward the position which he was so soon to assume before the country.

"Mr. Lincoln and I were going to Petersburg, in 1850, I think. The political world was dead; the

compromises of 1850 seemed to have sealed the negro's fate. Things were stagnant, and all hope for progress in the line of freedom seemed to be crushed out. Lincoln was speculating with me about the deadness of things and the despair which arose out of it, and deeply regretting that his human strength and power were limited by his nature to rouse and stir up the world. He said gloomily, despairingly, sadly : ' How hard, oh, how hard it is to die and leave one's country no better than if one had never lived for it ! The world is dead to hope, deaf to its own death struggle, made known by a universal cry. What is to be done ? Is anything to be done ? Who can do anything ? And how is it to be done ? Did you ever think on these things ? ' "

He and others like him had builded more wisely than they knew, and the state of things was by no means so hopeless as it seemed.

There had been from the beginning a vast and by no means inactive popular sense of right warring against slavery. It had enacted the ordinance of 1787, shutting out the evil from the Northwestern Territory. It had eradicated slavery from several of the original thirteen States. It had fought for and won the Missouri Compromise of 1820, prohibiting slavery in new States to be formed north of the latitude of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . It had now recently assured the freedom of California and Oregon, and was practically restricting the area of the institution to its old limits, including Texas, after a manner and with a force which was clearly understood to pen it

up where it might some day be expected to die. So it would have died in due season, and it perished the more quickly simply because of the spasmodic effort soon to be made by its supporters to break through this destructive barrier.

The Whig nomination for Congress was offered to Mr. Lincoln in 1850, but he adhered to his resolution and kept out of politics, for his hour had evidently not come.

The old time was passing away, and the year 1852 witnessed the last appearance of the Whig Party as a great national organization. Its National Convention put aside Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, as if putting away the Fugitive Slave Law with them, although formally endorsing the compromise measures which included it, and nominated General Winfield Scott for President. The Democratic National Convention took bolder ground upon the slavery question, and emphasized its zeal for the letter of the compromises by nominating General Franklin Pierce, well known to be a State Rights Democrat and slavery-extensionist as outspoken as James K. Polk himself. Both parties went before the people with solemn declarations that nothing should be permitted to reopen the perilous agitation of the slavery question. The old issues were dead or temporarily paralyzed, and there was so little to make a fight about that the Whig Party, attacking nothing and defending nothing, obtained only forty-two votes in the Electoral College, while its bolder adversary scored two hundred and fifty-four, with a firm control of Congress.

Their failure to secure the Whig Presidential nomination in 1852 was said to have been almost the death blow of the two great Whig statesmen. Daniel Webster lingered until Autumn, when his end was hastened by an accident. Henry Clay passed away before midsummer. Abraham Lincoln was chosen by the citizens of Springfield to deliver a funeral oration in honor of the party chief whom he had so long admired and followed, but those who listened to it were disappointed. The address lacked the fire and fervor which might have been in it if the life of Henry Clay had ended with a fight against a Fugitive Slave Law, instead of for one.

The administration of President Pierce began with a great pledge, publicly taken, not to disturb the compromises of 1850, but the advocates of slavery as a permanent institution were discovering that the compromise measures of Henry Clay had contained and concealed an abolitionist victory. The great region west of the Missouri State line was fast opening to immigration, and threatened to be cut up, year after year, into ever so many new free States, utterly destroying the balance of power between the South and the North which had previously been maintained in the United States Senate. The Missouri line was itself an impassable barrier, under the provisions of both the old and the new compromises, unless in some manner a gateway should be opened. Wrathful murmurs grew louder and deeper all over the South, as the facts of the situation were set forth, from day to day, by orators and journalists. It was evident that a huge amount

of very combustible material was heaping up, endangering the future peace of the Republic. Clay, Webster, Fillmore, Buchanan, and other statesmen in Congress had elaborately described and estimated the danger. Party platforms had denounced any foe of his country who should traitorously meddle with it. Everybody was willing to admit that it was full of tinder and brimstone and explosives, and so a knot of leading politicians in Washington decided that for the good and peace of the nation they would set it on fire at once, and they obtained a promise from President Pierce that the kindling of that fire should be adopted by him as a measure of his administration.

Just before the close of President Fillmore's term, on February 2d, 1853, a bill was presented in the House of Representatives, by W. A. Richardson, of Illinois, Chairman of the Committee on Territories, "to organize the Territory of Nebraska." Under that title was then included all the land now called Kansas and Nebraska, from the Missouri line to the Rocky Mountains. It was regarded almost as routine work, was passed on the 10th of the month, and went to the Senate. Here the measure met with more positive objections, arising from its imperfect protection of Indian reservations, the sparseness of the resident population, and other considerations, but it was expressly declared in the debates, on both sides, without contradiction, that the region so to be organized was made free by the existing compromises. The Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories was Stephen A. Douglas,

of Illinois, and he urged the passage of the bill with a fair degree of energy, but the near approach of the end of the session and the pressure of other business prevented its reaching a final vote. Had it done so, the bill would probably have passed, and the anti-slavery barrier at the Missouri western border would have been made stronger than ever. As it was, the entire matter of Nebraska territorial organization went over to the next Congress. During all the long months of 1853 the political future involved in the organic law of the yet unpeopled region underwent a careful discussion at the hands of thoughtful politicians at the North and at the South, but so firmly established were the compromises supposed to be that when the Thirty-second Congress assembled, it was mentally prepared for precisely such a bill as Senator Douglas introduced on January 4th, 1854. He accompanied it with a long report explaining its provisions and averring that it in no manner disturbed the compromises of 1850. If this bill had passed it would have left the gate closed as before, subject only to a few doubts and questions of interpretation in the minds of the men most anxious to have it opened. The debates upon that bill, the caucuses held, and the agreements made relating to it are interesting studies in political history, but do not require narration here. They resulted in the preparation, by Senator Douglas and the party chiefs who co-operated with him, of yet a third bill, dividing the area into two new Territories, Kansas and Nebraska, and practically repealing the Missouri Compromise by declaring it

inoperative. It was introduced on January 23d, 1854. In an instant the floodgates of slavery agitation were thrown open, and the very terms of the bill itself provided for a hand-to-hand struggle between the friends and foes of the "peculiar institution" upon the soil of Kansas. In his talk with Herndon, in 1850, Mr. Lincoln had asked: "What is to be done? Is anything to be done? Who can do anything? And how is it to be done?" It might almost be said that his old political adversary and rival had now given him an explanatory answer.

## CHAPTER XV.

*The Great Tumult—Douglas at Chicago—Lincoln's Great Speech at Springfield—A Premature Party Movement—Lincoln's New Fame—Candidate for United States Senator—Election of Trumbull.*

WHILE the abolitionists of the North had never been able to poll more than about a hundred and fifty-eight thousand votes as a distinct party, a much larger number of voters, as yet nominally Whigs or Democrats, were sincerely in favor of the abolition of slavery. They had been quiescent, because they saw no way open for practical aggressive action. Apart from these, both Whigs and Democrats might fairly be divided into two classes. One class had accepted the compromises as a barrier against abolitionism and its pernicious agitations, endangering the peace of the nation and the perpetuity of the Union. Another and very large class had submitted to the compromises almost gloomily, as affording a barrier against pro-slavery agitation and the extension of what they deemed an unqualified evil. To this latter body of men the Kansas-Nebraska Bill came as a declaration of war.

Extreme abolitionism, trebled its forces in a day, and the great outcry raised by its leaders had a point which could not be put aside, for they were able to say: "Look at this! We did not do it!



We are not the agitators ! Slavery itself assails the public peace !”

The wrath of the people of the North arose in an angry tide. Everywhere there were great public meetings and fiery denunciations of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, while the press turned with fierce invective against the men who proposed to break down the great bulwark of human freedom, which both parties had declared to be as sacred as the Constitution itself.

Even at the South there was a powerful conservative element opposed to the bill, but it was clamored into silence by the vehemence with which the advocates of slavery extension hailed what seemed to them a promised victory.

The disintegration of the Whig Party at the South advanced a long step when most of its extreme pro-slavery men passed at once into the Democratic ranks as supporters of the bill, while at the North a similar process was checked for a short time only. The Democratic Party at the North was at once rent in twain, and its anti-Nebraska faction formed more or less open coalitions, in State after State, with the anti-Nebraska Whigs. While the debates upon the bill proceeded, Congress was deluged with petitions against it, one of which was signed by three thousand clergymen. The State election of New Hampshire, the home of President Pierce, took place in March. His father before him had been known, during many years, as “the most influential man in New Hampshire,” and the son had succeeded to the same ascription, but the strong

Democratic majority, eighty-nine in the State Legislature, was wiped out at the Spring election. That example was imitated by Connecticut a few weeks later, and it was well understood that other free States were ready to follow, but the supporters of the bill in Congress stood firm. The Administration was able to hold a sufficient number of its Northern adherents up to the mark, the Southern Democrats were a unit, they were re-enforced by pro-slavery Whig votes, and in May the bill was passed.

There were in that Congress only four avowed Free-soilers, with seventy-one Whigs and one hundred and fifty-nine Democrats. It had seemed as if the future of the country had been placed almost irrevocably in the hands of the great political organization which had controlled it during a full generation, with but two breaks in the succession of its Presidents. In the election of 1852 the Whig opposition had carried but two States at the South, with twenty-four votes, and but two at the North, with eighteen. Even now several free State Legislatures, among them that of Illinois, were able to pass resolutions approving the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, but in every case there was a hard fight, and each set of resolutions carried with it a prophecy of disaster.

The session of Congress continued until August, and then most of the members went home to give an account of themselves to their constituents. Senator Douglas did not hasten back to Illinois, but it was announced soon that he would address the

people of Chicago on September 1st. The population of the city was very different in character from that of Central and Southern Illinois, being largely made up of immigrants from the Middle States and New England. Still it had been a stronghold of Senator Douglas, the Little Giant of Illinois, as his admirers called him, and he expected to have a large and attentive audience before which to make his proposed defence of his course in Congress. Very full attention, indeed, was paid to his arrival in the city. The bells of several churches tolled as for a funeral, and the flags of many vessels in the harbor were displayed at half-mast, while a crowd of about five thousand people gathered around the stand from which he was to speak. It was a large crowd, considering the fact that the better class of anti-Nebraska Whigs and Democrats did not come at all.

Senator Douglas made his appearance and began his promised speech. Its main point had been already often repeated in Congress, an assertion that the question of slavery ceased to be a cause for national agitation when removed beyond the reach of Federal legislation and submitted for decision to the people organizing a territory for admission to the Union as a State. The course of current events was so manifestly against the sanity of this position that the crowd finally lost what little patience it began with. After about three quarters of an hour of his argument they plied him more and more stormily and derisively with questions. He was a combative man, and his rejoinders were by no means

soft answers calculated to turn away wrath. The crowd grew more and more boisterous, and its questionings assumed a fierce and even menacing tone. He faced the tumult courageously until, at last, at about half past ten o'clock, his friends advised him to give it up, and he retired from the stand. Some journals declared their regret that the misconduct of the Chicago mob had disgraced and injured the anti-Nebraska cause. Other observers, looking deeper and caring less for Senatorial dignity, of which no great excess had been exhibited, noted the political fact that the sharp questions put and the keen retorts made came from "the plain people." Positively the mere voters were feeling and thinking about this matter, and were not disposed to let the professional statesmen perform those functions for them, officially.

The political canvass opened early, and there seemed to be everywhere a breaking up of the old party machinery. New men were coming to the front and well-known men were taking new and unexpected positions. Nobody in Central Illinois was surprised, however, when a recognized anti-slavery Whig like Abraham Lincoln, who had voted forty-two times for the Wilmot Proviso and had introduced in Congress a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, now put aside his law practice and came out vigorously against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. He was not and would not become a candidate for office, but he was ready to address public meetings on behalf of other candidates. Men who heard him said that he had never before spoken

so well, and it was noticed that he hardly mentioned any local issue or any old party doctrine, but gave his every breath to the entirely new combat which had summoned him once more to leadership.

The State Agricultural Fair of Illinois was to be held at Springfield that year, during the first week in October. Held anywhere, it was sure to attract great crowds of people, but at the capital and centre it was expected to bring together an uncommonly full representation of the people of the entire commonwealth. Nowhere else could it have assumed so marked a political value, and the leading politicians of the State came as with one accord. Senator Douglas had made speeches elsewhere after his unpleasant evening at Chicago, and it was a matter of course that he should announce a purpose of addressing the multitude assembled by the State Fair. There was a prevailing impression that no other man was quite the equal of Senator Douglas as a stump speaker, but the anti-Nebraska men, with one voice, assigned to Mr. Lincoln the duty of making the required rejoinder. He would do as well, and, perhaps, a little better, they thought, than anybody else on their side.

Senator Douglas spoke on October 3d. Owing to bad weather, the meeting was held in the State House, packed to its capacity, and not in the open air, as intended. Mr. Lincoln was present, listening, and was to speak in the same place on the following day, the 4th. All the previous arrangements and the circumstances aided and gave effect to the strong impression, which at once went out to the

entire United States, that Stephen A. Douglas had found himself pitted against Abraham Lincoln in a tremendous oratorical duel. They were old acquaintances, each thoroughly aware of all the peculiarities and capabilities of the other. Lincoln possessed a present advantage in knowing and studying beforehand all the possible points of the Senator's position and argument, while it may be that the audience addressed by the latter was disposed to be more than usually critical. He spoke with more than his accustomed power, and when he sat down he had wiped away all the evil consequences of his defeat at Chicago. He had made, as he afterward continued to make, a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of those who heard him. There was an unexpected strength in his presentation of his case, and he assumed the attitude of a man who had patriotically sacrificed his popularity and his hope of further advancement for the sake of his country's peace. The friends of Mr. Lincoln waited almost anxiously for the morrow, somewhat in doubt as to how any effort which he might make would compare with the ringing oratory of the Little Giant. The next day came, the crowd reassembled, and Mr. Lincoln's response to Douglas continued during four long hours to astonish his friends and his enemies alike. No report was made of it, and no part of it had been reduced to writing beforehand, but those who heard it were even extravagant in their praises. Mr. Douglas himself had listened, and there had been brief passages at arms between him and the speaker at several points, in which Mr.

Lincoln's ready wit enabled him to win special advantages. He was a very unsafe man to interrupt with a question. On the following day the Senator spoke again, laboring vainly during a two hours' speech to break the force of Lincoln's damaging indictment of his favorite measure, its evasion of the compromises, its bad faith, bad policy, and all the defects and fallacies of the argument by which it had been sustained. He succeeded in rallying his discouraged and wavering party, becoming more than ever the idol of a large faction of it, but he did not succeed in winning back the important fragment which had determined never to assent in any manner to the extension of the area of human bondage. To complete his work, it was necessary for him to be heard again in other parts of the State, and the now enthusiastic anti-Nebraska men, Whigs and Democrats, called upon Mr. Lincoln to follow. There was one more contest between them at Peoria, similar in its arrangements to that at Springfield, but it was very much too similar in its results, and Mr. Douglas refused to arrange any subsequent contests. Mr. Lincoln's Peoria speech was prepared with care, was written out and printed, doing excellent service as a campaign document, and a mine from which other stump speakers could draw materials for use in that canvass.

There was one feature of the occurrences during the State Fair which well illustrates the unsettled and perplexing condition of parties and politics.

There were other meetings besides those addressed by Lincoln and Douglas, and other speakers did

effective work on both sides, but there was one knot of men who proposed to hold a meeting of peculiar importance. They were the old abolitionists of the State of Illinois, and as yet they were regarded as obnoxious fanatics by the great mass of their fellow-citizens. Party fellowship with them was something resembling political suicide. These men, supposed to be so far in advance of their time, had been aroused to enthusiastic activity by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.

Their brethren in the East were already organizing Kansas Aid Societies and sending detachments of armed Free-soilers to assist in settling the more immediately available of the two new Territories and to prevent it from fulfilling the hopes of the slavery extensionists. The Illinois abolitionists, while forwarding a number of very efficient Kansas settlers, were now proposing the creation of a new party, in favor of abolishing slavery, but, perhaps, not at once saying so, into which all the too moderate anti-slavery men might be attracted. They proposed to call it the Republican Party, in imitation of the old organization created by Thomas Jefferson. They summoned a convention of delegates to meet at the State House in the evening of October 4th, and at the close of Mr. Lincoln's speech Hon. Owen Lovejoy, brother of the abolitionist editor murdered at Alton, arose and extended a pretty liberal invitation to all who heard him to consider themselves delegates and come. The movement was so manifestly premature that many of the most ardent anti-slavery men disapproved of it, and Mr.



Lincoln's personal friends dreaded lest he should become compromised by it. Mr. Herndon, himself an abolitionist, related afterward the action which he felt called upon to take to keep his friend out of a sort of political pitfall, when he became aware of the plan on foot to draw him into that convention.

"I rushed to Lincoln and said: 'Lincoln, go home; take Bob and the buggy and leave the county; go quickly; right off; and never mind the order of your going.' He stayed away till all conventions and fairs were over."

The evening meeting was held, but could hardly be called a convention. It was altogether incompetent to organize a party, but it appointed a central committee and named Mr. Lincoln one of its members. The moderate number of citizens present made speeches and praised the great reply of Lincoln to Douglas, but they accomplished little more. Their intended prize escaped them, although they afterward received a friendly communication from him in which he reminded them of the wide difference between the doctrines held by them and any which he had propounded.

During a temporary absence of Mr. Lincoln from home some of his friends inconsiderately announced his name as a candidate for the State Legislature. Mrs. Lincoln, knowing that he did not wish to run, went to the *Journal* office and had the announcement discontinued. On his return he objected strongly, but did not absolutely refuse. In fact, he seems to have been so deeply absorbed with matters of importance that he neglected a very obvious

prudence. He intended being a candidate for United States Senator, and membership of the Legislature would make him ineligible. Permitting himself to be elected, therefore, made it necessary for him to resign shortly afterward, and a political opponent was chosen in his place.

In spite of the hard fight made by Senator Douglas, the anti-Nebraska men carried the State. Had they been united, they could have controlled the Legislature, but old party bitternesses were still strong. When the business of choosing a Senator of the United States was taken up, the votes, after the preliminary skirmishing, were found to be divided as follows: Abraham Lincoln, forty-five Whigs and Free-soilers; James Shields, forty-one Douglas Democrats; Lyman Trumbull, five anti-Nebraska Democrats, who averred that under no circumstances would they vote for Lincoln or for any other Whig. After six ballots the name of Governor Joel A. Matteson was substituted for that of Shields, and a number of Lincoln's friends transferred their votes to Trumbull. On the ninth ballot, Matteson received forty-seven votes, Trumbull thirty-five, and Lincoln only fifteen, but these latter were men who were utterly determined to vote for him to the end, win or lose. It required all of his personal influence and persuasion to induce them to now turn their votes over to Mr. Trumbull and prevent the otherwise certain election of Mr. Matteson. Grumbling and angry and protesting, they consented. Mr. Trumbull was elected, to prove himself an uncommonly valuable member of the

Senate in the great debates in which he was soon to take part, while Mr. Lincoln's apparent sacrifice of his own interests to the good of the cause kept him out of the national Legislature that he might become first the leader of a new party and then the Chief Magistrate of the nation in its hour of trial.

## CHAPTER -XVI.

*Civil War in Kansas—The New Congress—Election of Speaker Banks—The Pittsburg Convention—The Decatur Caucus—Lincoln's Bloomington Speech—The Philadelphia Convention—Lincoln and the Vice-Presidency.*

THE new Territory of Kansas, lying directly west of the slave-holding State of Missouri, had now become a kind of tremendous theatre, a stage upon which the irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery was presented before the people of the United States. It was a long and bloody drama, but its teachings went to the hearts and understandings of a multitude who might otherwise have slackened in their opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and who in time might have wearily acquiesced in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

The first officers of the Territory were well selected by President Pierce. Among them was Mr. Lincoln's old friend Calhoun, Surveyor of Sangamon County. If the settlement of the Territory could have been left to the ordinary processes, its development into a State, under the rule of popular sovereignty relating to the slavery question, might have been peacefully attained for good or bad. Such, however, had not been the purpose of the pro-slavery leaders to whom Senator Douglas had yielded

when he abandoned his original bill for the organization of the Territory. They intended active colonization, and so, on the other hand, did the anti-slavery men of the North. Both sides carried out their plans with energy, and the governor and other officers sent to Kansas by President Pierce found themselves called upon to deal with disorders amounting to civil war. Pretty strong detachments of the regular army of the United States were afterward employed as a police force, and for a season even these were unable to restore order or prevent the long series of frauds, usurpations, oppressions, the outrages and murders, the reports of which maintained at fever heat the excitement of the people throughout the Union. One side of every story was told and believed at the South, and its opposite side at the North, with a multitude of pure fictions to deepen the effect of the sufficiently terrible truth. If, however, it were possible to believe all that was told, and that the Northern and Southern immigrants to Kansas were all alike inhuman and infamous, nevertheless, the one great teaching of the drama remained untouched, and it was utterly accepted by Abraham Lincoln. The hour was drawing near when he was to put it into condensed form of words, that all men might understand. That hour was not ripe, but it was fast ripening.

The Congress elected at the same time with President Pierce had contained a clear Democratic majority of eighty-four, and some of its Whig members had sustained the Administration in the Kansas conflict. In the succeeding Congressional election

the South stood by the President and his policy more firmly than ever, while the North expressed its opinion of the work going on in Kansas with astonishing emphasis. The new Congress contained only seventy-five Administration Democrats, less than half as many as were in its predecessor. With these were forty Know-Nothing Whigs, some of whom had anti-slavery leanings, and one hundred and eight pronounced and determined anti-Nebraska men, who declared that, for the time, at least, they had put aside all other issues.

Mr. Richardson, of Illinois, more than any other man representing Senator Douglas and the Administration measure, was nominated for Speaker of the House by the Democratic caucus. It was a bold challenge, and prevented any flinching on either side. The contest over the Speakership began on December 3d and terminated on January 23d. It operated as a prolonged process for the confirmation and combination of the several Opposition elements in Congress. When, at last, Nathaniel P. Banks, of Massachusetts, was elected Speaker, the new lines were pretty well drawn. The doubtful men had assisted in preparing the way, joining in putting aside the rule of the House and allowing a mere plurality to elect. Then they broke up. Thirty of them cast scattering ballots which expressed their mental condition. Twenty-five of them went over in a body to the Administration, and raised its vote—Mr. Aiken, of Georgia, having been substituted for Mr. Richardson—to one hundred, while the one hundred and three members who carried Mr. Banks

into the chair had become a drilled and disciplined force which was never afterward broken. They had completed the preliminary organization of the Republican Party, for here and not elsewhere was its birthplace.

The new Democratic Party may in like manner date its political existence from that contest, but its temporary leader, Senator Douglas, did not fully accord with or represent its real character and purposes, as was soon to become manifest. While acting as its champion, the man by whom he was met and overcome in public debate was in that manner, more than in any other, singled out as the champion of the Opposition.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, with all its defects, was now the law of the land, and the conservative position held by Mr. Lincoln may be understood from the fact that he disapproved of armed immigration to Kansas by any free State men not proposing to become permanent settlers. He succeeded in preventing Mr. Herndon and a number of excited friends from going to take part in the conflict, but joined heartily in sending money and supplies to the settlers who were there in good faith, determined to defend their lawful rights. He urged upon the political leaders, greater or lesser, who took counsel with him, that the strength of the new movement lay in holding up before the people the Democratic Administration and its policy as a murderous disturber of the public peace. Precisely what other ground was to be taken and what doctrines might be developed or defined with reference

to other points of public policy, it was hardly yet time to discuss.

On February 22d, 1856, two conventions were held, which perfectly illustrate the then condition of the Opposition elements which were taking form as a party.

One of these conventions was general in its character, and was composed of over three hundred prominent citizens from twenty-eight of the free States, Territories, and border slave States, not many of them being delegates chosen by the usual methods. They met at Pittsburg, and not only the personal character of the men and their political history, but the nature, the tone, and the result of their proceedings made a profound impression upon the nation. Their debates were distinguished by dignity and moderation, as well as by ability, and it was impossible to stigmatize them as abolitionists or fanatics. They selected and appointed a central committee for the organization of a new party, issued a ringing address to the country, and named June 17th, 1856, as the day for the assembling of a National Convention of delegates from all the States and Territories willing to be there represented.

They did not undertake to declare beforehand the position to be taken by the new party, but adopted resolutions which called for the repeal of existing laws permitting slavery to enter Territories previously protected from it ; declared resistance by lawful means to the introduction of slavery into any Territory ; demanded the immediate admission of Kan-



sas as a free State, and denounced the administration of President Pierce.

Acting in complete accord with the men who met at Pittsburg were the many voluntary gatherings of anti-Nebraska men in all parts of the Union where such a meeting could safely be held. There were wide areas within which a man could declare approval of the election of Speaker Banks only at the risk of his life and property.

The other convention of February 22d, 1856, was held at Decatur, Ill., and consisted of fifteen editors of anti-Nebraska newspapers. They discussed the situation and issued a call for a State Convention of delegates opposed to the Pierce Administration and its measures, to meet at Bloomington on May 29th. After their adjournment they had a banquet, and among the invited guests who sat down to it was Abraham Lincoln, who was censured by some and praised by others for his courage in keeping company with a set of violent radicals from whom all cautious men were disposed to keep away. Some of his best friends were exceedingly anxious that he should not be so rash as actually to attend the Bloomington Convention. His abolitionist friends were as earnest the other way, and in his absence, and without consulting him, Mr. Herndon himself signed Mr. Lincoln's name to a published call for a Sangamon County Convention, to choose delegates to the one at Bloomington. "I determined to make him take a stand," said Mr. Herndon afterward, and he found himself at once confronted by Lincoln's old law partner, John T. Stuart, angrily

protesting against such a ruinous use of Lincoln's name without authority. Herndon took the responsibility of what he had done, and was speedily relieved by a letter of approval from Mr. Lincoln. Conservative old-line Whigs, like Mr. Stuart, washed their hands of the Bloomington Convention and all its works in advance, while it seemed as if all things were working together to increase the ferment of popular feeling which had caused it to be summoned. Reports of outrages upon free State men in Kansas grew even darker, and the fierceness of the current debates in Congress was emphasized by the cowardly beating, almost the murder, of Charles Sumner in his seat in the Senate chamber.

When the State Convention assembled at Bloomington on May 29th, it was really a mass meeting of the active anti-Nebraska men of Illinois, most of them coming without formal election and all disposed to act without reference to previous party affiliations. They were between five hundred and six hundred in number, brimming with enthusiasm, but deeply impressed with the need for prudence in their utterances. Some of the many eloquent speeches made would have repelled conservatism of all kinds, if reported and printed, but one of the peculiarities of the occasion was the apparent absence or inaction of stenographic journalists. Candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor were nominated, and other nominations were intrusted to a committee. A platform was adopted which seemed almost excessively moderate a few months later, but its declarations of principle were every

way as radical as the great mass of the new party was prepared to accept. Delegates were chosen to the National Convention, to meet at Philadelphia on June 17th. Mr. Lincoln was present, a central figure, an acknowledged leader and trusted counselor, but he made no speech until the close. It was understood that he was to address the convention, and all men waited eagerly to hear him. He had made no written preparation, and there was no report of what he said, but many capable critics who had heard him before, and who then and afterward listened to him, declared this to be the most eloquent speech he ever delivered. He was not now replying to Douglas, he had the entire field of controversy before him, and all the hot thoughts which through long years had been taking form within him rushed to his lips for expression. His warmest admirers had not expected from him any such exhibition of oratorical power, and those who heard him for the first time were astonished. When he sat down, his leadership of the new movement in the West had been sealed beyond all further questioning.

The new organization called itself the People's Party at first, over a large part of the country, but the name of Republican was shortly adopted by common consent. Its National Convention assembled on June 17th, 1856, at Philadelphia, and was composed of over a thousand men, with varied and often very defective authority, to represent constituencies in all the free States, the Territories, and some of the border slave States.

The platform which the convention adopted had a sound of increasing boldness upon the slavery question, but went no further than to deny the right of Congress to give legal existence to slavery in any Territory, and to declare the duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories "those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery." This part of the platform was simply the Wilmot Proviso in another form, and gave no hint of an ultimate interference with slavery in the States wherein it already existed, protected by the Constitution. Other planks of the platform had almost a Whig semblance, for they favored internal improvements in the shape of good rivers and harbors and the Pacific Railroad. It demanded the immediate admission of Kansas, and its claim of freedom of conscience and equal rights for all was aimed at the current suppression of anti-Nebraska oratory in most of the States south of Mason's and Dixon's line. The Administration was denounced, but the tariff and other old party issues were avoided.

This work having been performed, the convention, after one preliminary ballot, selected John C. Frémont, of California, as its candidate for President. There were many reasons why the brilliant army officer, whose name was associated with the acquisition of California and the exploration of the Rocky Mountain country, should be chosen to carry the standard of the new movement. He was well known to possess abundant abilities, although without experience as a legislator or statesman. It was dryly remarked, also, by Democratic journalists, that in-

asmuch as the campaign was to end in certain defeat, the Republicans had selected a man of tried courage to lead their forlorn hope. It came very near to being a victory, nevertheless.

The next business in order was the selection of a candidate for Vice-President, and here a discovery was made. On the first ballot fifteen names were presented, of men who had become more or less prominent in the anti-Nebraska contest. At the head of the list stood William L. Dayton, of New Jersey, with two hundred and fifty-nine votes, and next to him was Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, with one hundred and ten. Speaker Banks was next, with forty-six, and the rest were scattering. It was manifestly imprudent to indulge in any contest, and the nomination of Mr. Dayton was at once declared, but even Mr. Lincoln was astonished at the vote given to himself. He was attending court in Urbana, Ill., when the telegraph brought the report of the first vote for Vice-President.

"Why, that must be our Lincoln—hundred and ten votes for him," remarked somebody near him.

"No, that can't be," he responded. "It must be the *great* Lincoln from Massachusetts."

There was, indeed, a prominent citizen of the Bay State bearing the same name, but the Illinois leader had won already a wider fame than either he or his friends as yet imagined.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*The Canvass of 1856—Revolt of Douglas—Lincoln's New Career—Buchanan's Position—The Leecompton Constitution—The Illinois Senatorial Canvass—Lincoln's Bloomington Speech—Debates with Douglas—The Freeport Questions—Defeat that was Victory.*

THE Democratic Party was as yet nominally united, although large factions of its membership held widely varying views as to the interpretation of their political creed. Its National Convention nominated James Buchanan for President and John C. Breckinridge for Vice-President, upon a platform which accepted the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and its consequences. The remnants of the old Whig Party nominated Millard Fillmore, of New York, and Andrew Jackson Donelson, of Tennessee, thereby enabling a large number of timid voters to refrain, for a time, from becoming either Democrats or Republicans. A precisely similar cave of escape was opened to them four years later. In the campaign of 1856 the Fillmore men, or some of them, claimed to have saved the Union by preventing Frémont from carrying the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois. He received one hundred and fourteen votes from the other free

States, against one hundred and seventy-four in all, given to Mr. Buchanan. If only half of the sixty-eight votes of the four States rescued by the Whig ticket had been changed to Frémont, the Republican Party would have won the day. Mr. Fillmore received eight hundred and seventy-four thousand five hundred and thirty-four votes at the polls, but carried only the one State of Maryland.

The long months of the Presidential campaign were a period of great excitement for the country. All business interests suffered. Mr. Lincoln himself, at the head of the Illinois Republican electoral ticket, was reported to have made more than fifty speeches, almost giving up his private affairs to throw all his energies into the great battle. He had something worth fighting for now, a cause which aroused all the hitherto only half-awakened forces which had lain dormant within him. He very nearly carried his party to victory in his own State, only the Whig stumbling-block preventing success. The Republican candidate for governor, an old Whig, was elected by a plurality of four thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine votes, while a sufficient number who gave him their ballots also voted for the Fillmore electors and permitted the Buchanan ticket to succeed by a plurality of over nine thousand. They gave, however, a fair indication of what their tendencies would be when a final decision should be forced upon them. They were not afraid to have a Republican governor, but as yet they were inclined to shiver at the possibili-

ties involved in the election of a Republican President.

The most notable effect of the campaign of 1856, not excepting by any means the election of Mr. Buchanan, was the change which took place in the minds and hearts and utterances of men. The pro-slavery extremists of the South openly declared the election of an anti-slavery President a sufficient ground for disunion and war, and their declarations no longer met with strenuous opposition at home, as formerly. The secessionists were no longer a mere knot of violent talkers, they had become leaders of thought, nearly ready to step out as leaders of action. At the North, in like manner, anti-slavery sentiment had made a tremendous advance, and it was almost honorable to have been an abolitionist from the beginning. Respectable men felt very respectable as members of a party which had swept eleven States at the last election, and they were getting ready to remain in it in case its next platform should be made of more radical timbers. At the same time, it was to be perceived by clear-headed politicians, such as Senator Douglas, for instance, that the great Buchanan vote had been rallied for that election only and that it could not again be brought to the polls in support of the idea of slavery extension. He himself did not desire the extension of slavery, and he did not approve of the condition of things in Kansas, largely consequent upon his own avowed efforts on behalf of the public peace. The kind of peace obtained was astonishing, and he prepared to offer his wing of the Democratic Party



something better. It was emphatically his own, and needed no other name than the Douglas Democracy.

The troubles in Kansas continued. The printed expressions of pro-slavery opinion and purpose were as violent as ever after the election, and were widely republished and read at the North. Moreover, a powerful agency in maintaining and increasing the impression that the slave power had undertaken to extend itself not only over the Territories but the free States themselves, was the discovery, early in 1857, through what was known as the Dred Scott Decision, by the Supreme Court, that seven of its nine judges held remarkable opinions upon points of Constitutional law affecting the right of free black men to retain their freedom.

The points of the case were but little understood then by the people, and have ceased to be important now, but the great mass of the people of the North accepted the heavy judicial utterances as allying the Supreme Court with the extreme State Rights and pro-slavery wing of the Democratic Party. So many men pronounced them at variance with the principle declared by Senator Douglas to underlie his famous bill, that he felt called upon to explain the relations between the Supreme Court and popular sovereignty in the Territories. He did so before an immense concourse at Springfield, June 12th, 1857, and he spoke with his accustomed ability. It was almost an expected result that he should be replied to by Abraham Lincoln, and a fortnight later the Republican champion delivered

to a mass-meeting in Springfield an argument upon all the points involved, which was accepted by his party as an exceedingly powerful presentation of their position. It really enabled hundreds of thousands of men to take a position intelligently, for the nation held the Supreme Court in high honor, and it seemed almost like profanity, to many good citizens, to question its decision, if it had really made one. Mr. Douglas himself was about to be driven from much of the ground which he had taken in his own speech. At the outset of the Kansas troubles the free State settlers had been in a minority, made yet more helpless at any election by volunteer voters from Missouri. This had long since ceased to be the case, and the permanent settlers of the Territory were two to one in favor of organizing a free State under a constitution prohibiting slavery. Technical irregularities in the method of adopting the anti-slavery Topeka Constitution, as it was called, although caused by the existing disorders, were in the way of its immediate submission to Congress. On the other hand, the pro-slavery plan of organization, known as the Lecompton Constitution, was placed in the hands of President Buchanan with a sufficient shell of external legality to warrant him in laying it before Congress and asking favorable action thereon, as if in that manner the decision of the question of slavery could be omitted from the organic law of the new commonwealth and left for the future action of the people of the State of Kansas, subject to the Dred Scott decision. The view of President Buchanan was expressed by himself at

about this time—"slavery exists in Kansas under the Constitution of the United States." It was the old doctrine of John C. Calhoun practically applied, and it was not the creed of the Douglas Democracy or of its leader. At no time had the great mass of the party accepted the dogma of Mr. Calhoun, that the Constitution carried slavery with it until prevented by the positive statutes of a sovereign State. Mr. Douglas was, therefore, consistent with everything in his record, except parts of his Springfield speech, when, on reaching Washington, just before the opening of the Winter session of 1857-58, he called upon the President and protested against the Lecompton Constitution as being manifestly not the expression of the will of the Kansas people.

The interview was stormy, for Mr. Buchanan was a man of fixed ideas and stubborn will, quite capable of dictatorially warning Mr. Douglas that he was on the road to political ruin and of receiving for reply, "I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead."

The President's Message to Congress, recommending the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, contained an argument in full accord with the Dred Scott decision and the extreme pro-slavery view.

There was but one course for Senator Douglas to pursue. His term of office was soon to expire and he was to go before the people for re-election. The only men upon whom he could depend had accepted in good faith his interpretation of his course with reference to the Missouri Compromise and believed

that his Kansas-Nebraska Bill actually left the slavery question to the settlers of a Territory.

The President's Message set forth the opposite doctrine, and the Lecompton Constitution was the bodily form of that doctrine. To be consistent with his own declarations and true to his supporters, Senator Douglas was forced into open rebellion against the Buchanan Administration. Two other free State Democratic Senators, Stuart, of Michigan, and Broderick, of California, acted with him, the remaining eight standing firmly by the President and aiding the passage of the Lecompton Bill through the Senate. It went to the House of Representatives, to be there pounded to death. A substitute was adopted by the House, providing for a resubmission of the Lecompton Constitution to a vote of the people of Kansas. This went to the Senate, and the differing views of the two legislative bodies led to a Committee of Conference, which devised yet another bill, known as the English Bill, which sent back the Lecompton plan with a grant of land added to it if accepted, and with no land in case of rejection, and a threat that the new State would not then be admitted until it should contain many thousands more of voters. The conference English Bill was passed by both Houses and signed by the President, only to have its offer and threat rejected by the people of Kansas by a majority of ten thousand. Senator Douglas and his supporters in Senate and House vigorously opposed the English Bill. The Administration, its adherents in Congress, and all the journals it controlled

denounced him unsparingly, but he became suddenly almost the most popular man in the United States. There were many enthusiastic Republicans who were half prepared to welcome him into their own ranks, and some in Illinois openly asserted that the party there ought to adopt him and make him their candidate for United States Senator.

There was no occasion whatever for doing so, since Mr. Douglas vehemently asserted that the Administration and not he had departed from sound Democratic doctrine. He was to be the undisputed nominee for Senator of the Democrats of Illinois in the campaign of 1858, and he had not abated one jot of his known ambition to be the Democratic candidate for President in 1860.

The State Democratic Convention of Illinois, held in April, 1858, gave Mr. Douglas so cordial an endorsement that it seemed as if Mr. Buchanan had few friends left upon Grand Prairie. The exact truth of the matter was not to be disclosed until two years later.

The Republican State Convention was summoned to meet at Springfield on June 16th, 1858, and the occasion became forever memorable in the political history of the United States.

Illinois occupied a central position in American politics. It was the home of Senator Douglas, and the declaration of his constituents in his favor had already produced a profound impression throughout the Union. Men elsewhere, of every shade of political opinion, waited with deep interest for the response of the Illinois Republicans to the continual

cry from Kansas, to the Dred Scott decision, to the Buchanan Administration, and to the later utterances and attitude of Senator Douglas.

It was well understood, beforehand, that the most important business apparently to be performed by the convention would be the placing of Abraham Lincoln in nomination for the United States' Senate, in direct antagonism to the originator of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. It was generally believed that such a nomination was equivalent to an election, should Mr. Lincoln maintain the somewhat cautious reserve which had hitherto distinguished even his most eloquent arguments on the side of Constitutional liberty. It was even rumored that his prospects were to be largely increased by the refusal of Administration Democrats to vote for Douglas, if they did not, indeed, set up a candidate of their own. In short, Mr. Lincoln could be beaten only by some rashness upon his part which should drive away from him his more conservative or timid supporters, and solidify against him the jarring factions of the Democratic opposition. He held in his hands a seat in the Senate, but he had deliberately determined to put it away. Day by day, as the time for the convention to meet drew nearer, his mind was busied with the preparation of a speech, the words of which he did not propose to risk with the reporters. He wrote them out, sentence by sentence, as they took final shape, scribbling them on scraps of paper, old envelopes and the like, wherever he might be.

These were at last collected and copied, and he

was ready for the next step that he saw before him. He was willing to know what impression the speech would make upon different classes of people, and he read it first to his abolitionist law partner, Mr. Herndon. It began with the following stringent definition of the political situation :

*"Gentlemen of the Convention :*

"If we could first know where we are and whither we are drifting, we could better know what to do and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old and new, North as well as South."

"It is true," interrupted Mr. Herndon, "but is it entirely politic to speak it, or to read it as it is written?"

"That makes no difference," replied Mr. Lincoln. "The expression is a truth of all human experience, 'a house divided against itself cannot stand,' and 'he who runs may read.' The proposition is indisputably true, and has been true for more than six thousand years, and I *will* deliver it as it is written. I want to use some universally

known figure, expressed in simple language as universally known, that may strike home to the minds of men in order to rouse them to the peril of the times. I would rather be defeated with this expression in the speech, and it held up and discussed before the people, than to be victorious without it."

Leading Republicans from all parts of the State were gathering rapidly in Springfield, and Mr. Lincoln did not deal unfairly with them. He invited at least a dozen prominent men to meet him in the library of the State House, and there he read to them the tremendous declaration of the new departure which he proposed to make. Mr. Herndon was present, and he alone approved. Every other man urged Mr. Lincoln not to deliver that speech without extensive modifications, especially omitting the perilous clause with which it began, and which invited certain defeat for him and for the party at the polls. He waited until all had expressed their opinions, and then he responded :

" Friends, I have thought about this matter a great deal, have surveyed the question well from all corners, and am thoroughly convinced the time has come when it should be uttered, and if it must be that I go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to truth—die in the advocacy of what is right and just. This nation cannot live on injustice. 'A house divided against itself *cannot* stand,' I say again and again."

He seemed to be taking counsel of other men, but in reality he was preparing himself for the great step which he was about to take. The innate strength of the man was nobly exhibited in the fact



that he gathered new firmness in thus listening beforehand to the voices of doubt, timidity, and disapproval, as if to the mutterings of a storm which he was raising and which he must face.

The convention met on the 16th, and all its routine work was completed early upon the day following. This included the unanimous adoption of a resolution, "That Abraham Lincoln is the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas." It was but the formal expression of a fact, for he now stood absolutely alone and without a rival.

It was expected by all that he would make a speech at the close of the convention, and never before had any utterance of his been waited for with interest so nearly breathless. He looked out over the sea of upturned faces before him and stood still for a moment. Then clearly, distinctly, with a sort of metallic ring in its tone, his voice went out to the farthest listener, telling him and the nation the great truth that either freedom or slavery must die. From first to last the speech was a masterpiece, perfectly adapted to its purposes, and it did not fail of accomplishing any of these. His treatment of the later attitude of Senator Douglas may be condensed into his assertion that the cause of slavery restriction "must be entrusted to its own undoubted friends." While well aware that many would waver and even fall away for a season, he was prophetically sure that the great body of the Republican Party would promptly step forward to the inevitable line

which he was tracing, and the grand argument closed hopefully.

"The result is not doubtful," he said. "We shall not fail; if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it, but sooner or later the victory is sure to come."

The immediate result in Illinois was rendered more than doubtful, in spite of the enthusiastic applause which followed the peroration. Men who had been personal friends of Mr. Lincoln sorrowfully assured him that his "foolish speech would kill him," and one of them was answered, "If I had to draw a pen and erase my whole life from existence, and I had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerased." Well-known voices from the Atlantic States, and from Republicans in Congress, had already urged the men of Illinois to strengthen Douglas in his wrestle with the Administration, and these became more numerous now. Moderate anti-slavery men had hesitated to repeat the words "irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery," after William H. Seward. They now found themselves unable to say "in course of ultimate extinction," after Abraham Lincoln, and a number of them in Illinois decided to vote for Stephen A. Douglas, who had said that he "did not care whether slavery was voted down or up" in the Territories, provided that the rights of settlers to decide the matter should be protected.

The personal canvass of the State by the rival

champions, beginning shortly after the Bloomington Convention, was altogether without a parallel in the history of American politics. The friends of Senator Douglas planned that his tour of the State should take on something of the semblance of a triumphal procession, with thronged receptions, artillery salutes, banners, and music. It began at Chicago on July 9th, but the effect of the speech made by Douglas to the vast assembly which greeted him was diminished by that of a rejoinder uttered by Lincoln in the same place the next day to as large an audience. At Springfield, the speech of Senator Douglas, July 16th, was replied to by his adversary on the evening of the same day. Both of them had made other speeches than these, but the Little Giant felt that he was challenged in a manner which he could not avoid. It came to him in written form on July 24th, and a conference resulted in an agreement that the two contestants should not interfere with each other's oratory except at public meetings in seven specified towns of Illinois. These were selected with reference to population of districts and the convenience of the crowds who were anxious to hear those debates.

At each place named, the speaker opening the debate was entitled to an hour, his adversary then to an hour and a half in reply, and the first speaker to half an hour in closing. Douglas was to have the first opening at Ottawa, Lincoln the next at Freeport, and so on alternately. With the help of reporters and of the public press, the entire nation was quickly added to the audience of those debates.

On each side was a perfect master of the history, the law, and the argument available for the support of his position. The great fame of Senator Douglas had in it nothing accidental, for it was well earned, and nobody was surprised that he now surpassed his previous record as an orator. The reputation of Mr. Lincoln, however, was more recent, and less extended, and many who heard, and the great majority of those who afterward read his addresses and responses, were astonished to find that the brilliant Democratic leader had met with more than his match in oratorical force. In each successive combat the positions taken by Senator Douglas received such damaging blows that he might well be glad when all was ended, and he could make his remaining speeches without any immediate response from Abraham Lincoln. Both of them worked industriously during the intervals between their joint meetings. Prior to the debate at Freeport, Mr. Lincoln prepared a series of questions to propound to Mr. Douglas any possible answer to which must bring out more clearly the precise doctrine held by him upon the subject of slavery in the Territories. With reference to the points contained in these questions, the Democratic Party shortly split in two, Mr. Douglas was defeated for the Presidency, and the election of a Republican candidate, for instance Mr. Lincoln, became possible. They were as follows :

“ Question 1. If the people of Kansas shall, by means entirely unobjectionable in all other respects, adopt a State Constitution, and ask admission into the Union under it, before they have the

requisite number of inhabitants according to the English bill, some nine thousand three hundred, will you vote to admit them ?

“ Q. 2. Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution ?

“ Q. 3. If the Supreme Court of the United States shall decide that States cannot exclude slavery from their limits, are you in favor of acquiescing in, adopting, and following such decision as a rule of political action ?

“ Q. 4. Are you in favor of acquiring additional territory in disregard of how such acquisition may affect the nation on the slavery question ?”

Each of these inquiries had in it something fatal to the aspirations of any statesman who might desire the support of both wings of the Democratic Party. He could not hope to retain the men who favored the purchase and annexation of slaveholding Cuba, for instance, and at the same time keep the good-will of any other man who considered the area of slavery already large enough.

The most important points raised were manfully met by Senator Douglas. He said : “ In my opinion, the people of a Territory can by lawful means exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution. . . . It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a Territory under the Constitution. The people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by police regulations. Those

police regulations can only be established by the local Legislature."

He had himself been instrumental in setting aside a national "police regulation," known as the Missouri Compromise, but into these few sentences he had condensed a direct denial of the Calhoun doctrine, the declared position of President Buchanan and the Southern leaders, and many of the Northern leaders of the Democratic Party. His anti-slavery extension friends in Illinois were enabled to stand by him for a time, but the full effect of Mr. Lincoln's questions, and the answers given, could not be fully understood prior to the meeting of the next National Democratic Convention.

Very nearly did Mr. Lincoln succeed in overcoming the tremendous odds which he had confronted at Bloomington. His own party rallied better and better behind him after each of those great debates. Election day came, and when the ballots were counted it was found that one hundred and twenty-five thousand four hundred and thirty men had voted for Lincoln candidates for the State Legislature, electing forty-six members. One hundred and twenty-one thousand six hundred and nine had voted for Douglas candidates, electing, owing to unequal distribution of population, fifty-four members. Five thousand and seventy-one Buchanan voters had not elected anybody, but had aided the Republicans to carry their entire list of State officers, from governor down. When the Legislature assembled in January, 1859, Mr. Douglas was duly chosen Senator of the United States from Illinois.

Shortly afterward Mr. Lincoln wrote to a personal friend : " I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age, which I could have had in no other way ; and though I now sink out of view and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of liberty long after I am gone."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Growing Fame—The Cooper Institute Speech—Four Parties in the Field—The Rail Splitter of Illinois—The Great Chicago Convention—Abraham Lincoln Nominated for President.*

THE course of political events became feverishly rapid and exciting after the close of the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

The senator himself shortly set out upon an extended tour of the Southern States, making speeches in several cities with a manifest purpose of diminishing the evil effect of his forced replies to the Freeport questions. He reached Washington early in January, to find that he had been deposed from his old position as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, and that the Southern Democracy, led by Senators Brown and Davis, of Mississippi, had declared the breach between him and them irreconcilable. He met them with a fearlessness and candor which largely increased his personal following at the North, but the tide of political change was setting strongly in favor of the Republican Party. When Congress assembled in December they had very nearly a majority of the House of Representatives. The distinguishing feature of their strength was the tenacity of purpose with which they held together, voting for John Sherman,



of Ohio, for Speaker, under a running fire of well-directed oratory and continuous parliamentary skirmishing. John Brown's insane raid at Harper's Ferry, and other recent occurrences, were made the most of in efforts to compromise their position, but they persevered, until at last, January 30th, 1859, they changed their votes to William Pennington, of New Jersey, gained thereby four votes from the "scattering," and elected him.

Mr. Lincoln began at once to feel the effect upon his personal reputation produced by his joint debates with Douglas. His speeches were gathered and printed in volume form, and thirty thousand copies of the book were rapidly sold.

Invitations came to him from all directions to make occasional and political addresses. Most of these he was compelled to decline, for his private affairs were suffering severely. He had borne his own expenses in the campaign, besides his work and loss of time and loss of law fees, and a contribution of five hundred dollars to the campaign fund. He declared himself very nearly out of money.

The Republican Party throughout the country was looking forward to the Presidential campaign of 1860, and the friends of several statesmen had already discussed in the public press their relative claims to the party nomination. Month after month a pretty thorough analysis was made of each man's record, and of the possible advantages or disadvantages to be expected in presenting his name to the people. Some of Mr. Lincoln's biographers have carelessly asserted that he was an exception to this

rule, but such was not the case. His nomination followed the natural order of things, and was by no means a sudden ebullition. Men talked about him as a candidate, and spoke to him and wrote to him on the subject just as they did to Seward and others. The first notable public movement was made in the *Central Illinois Gazette*, printed in Champaign County, Ill., May 4th, 1859. It was an editorial article of some length, vigorously advocating the nomination of Mr. Lincoln for President. It was written by a young man, the editor of the journal, whom for that reason he afterward appointed one of his own secretaries in Washington. When the editor (the author of this book) examined his next week's exchanges, he found that every Illinois Republican paper on the list, with several in other States, and several Democratic papers as well, had either copied his editorial in whole or in part, or had noticed it more or less approvingly. Probably not less than a hundred Western journals, and many in the East, had freely discussed his merits as a candidate before the beginning of the year 1860.

It was by no means easy for so famous a man to return to the dull routine of law practice, and Mr. Lincoln's efforts to do so were only partially successful. He consented to go to Ohio in the Autumn of 1859, and to make a number of speeches which greatly aided the Republicans of that State in carrying the November elections.

In September, *Harper's Magazine* printed an elaborate political paper contributed by him, but it was speedily lost sight of.

While declining the mass of invitations now pouring upon him, he accepted one, the most important of all, from the Young Men's Central Union of New York, to deliver a lecture in Cooper Institute. On the evening of February 27th, 1860, the great hall of the Institute was packed by such an audience, ladies and gentlemen, as had rarely been gathered in the city of New York to hear a political address. The character and number of the men and women present bore ample and remarkable testimony to the fame already won by the speaker. To their expectation of an uncommonly perfect example of Western oratory was added a strong feeling of curiosity to see the man who had vanquished Senator Douglas in debate, and who was so much talked of as a possible Republican candidate for President of the United States. Mr. Lincoln was introduced by William Cullen Bryant. The speech was an exceedingly clear and able presentation of the origin, principles, history, and purposes of the Republican Party, and it at once took rank as a State paper of the first importance. The *New York Tribune* of the next day declared that "no man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience." A surprisingly large number of those who heard or read the address perceived that Mr. Lincoln had made a tremendous advance personally. Before that day he had been the representative Republican of Illinois, and, perhaps, of the Western States, but he had now stepped forward as the representative and advocate of the entire party. He had gained an Eastern repu-

tation. He made several speeches in New England before returning home, and each in succession deepened the impression already made, preparing the minds of men for the party action which was shortly to be taken. Months earlier he had formally assented to the use of his name as a Presidential candidate, after a consultation with a small caucus of personal friends gathered in a room of the State House at Springfield.

The chiefs of the Democratic Party well understood that they had a difficult task before them in preparing for the Presidential campaign of 1860. The party National Convention was summoned to meet at Charleston, S. C., on April 23d. When the delegates assembled it speedily became evident that the factions present were irreconcilable. Senator Douglas was able to muster a bare majority of votes, but not the two thirds required for a nomination, while the minority refused to accept him in any event, and a number of extreme pro-slavery men from the cotton States actually withdrew. After ten days of hopeless discussion and balloting the convention adjourned, to meet again in Baltimore on June 18th. Dark with forebodings of future trouble as was the prospect held out to the nation by the tumultuous proceedings at Charleston, the Republican Party grew stronger, from day to day, and more determined to stand by the axiom declared by Mr. Lincoln in his Bloomington speech. It was said by one observer that the only remaining question was whether they should nominate "the irrepressible conflict" in the person of William H.

Seward, or "ultimate extinction" in the person of Abraham Lincoln.

When the Democratic National Convention re-assembled at Baltimore, with some changes in its membership, its division was completed. One faction nominated John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, and Joseph Lane, of Oregon. The other nominated Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, and Herschel V. Johnson, of Georgia.

Already, on May 9th, the shattered remnants of the old Whig Party had held a convention at Baltimore, had declared themselves the Constitutional Union Party, nominating John Bell, of Tennessee, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts. They thus supplied, as before, a highly respectable cave in which a large number of conservative citizens could hide themselves, and pretend that they were out of the political storm that was raging.

The Republican State Convention of Illinois was held at Decatur, on May 9th and 10th, 1860. Nominations for the several State offices were made, and the usual routine business was transacted. Old John Hanks was not a delegate, but he came, bringing with him two of the rails which he and Lincoln had cut to fence in Thomas Lincoln's land, not far from that place, twenty years before. They were presented to the convention with extraordinary dramatic effect. Hanks brought them in himself, and they bore a huge placard, with the inscription :

" TWO RAILS

*from a lot made by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks in the Sangamon Bottom in the year 1830."*

Mr. Lincoln was already on the platform, to which he had been carried bodily over the heads of the cheering multitude, and in response to the boisterous demands now made for a speech, he arose and said :

“Gentlemen, I suppose you want to know something about those things. Well, the truth is, in the year 1830, John Hanks and I did make some rails in the Sangamon bottom, to fence a piece of land. I don’t know whether these are some of those rails or not. The fact is, I don’t think they are a credit to the makers. But I do know this, I made rails then, and I think I could make better rails than these now.”

Those who expected a speech were disappointed, but an appeal had been made to the very hearts of the workingmen of the United States, and thousands of votes had been gained for the Illinois Rail Splitter, who had become so striking an example of the possibilities provided for the poorest day laborer by American institutions.

The convention adopted, enthusiastically, the following :

“*Resolved*, That Abraham Lincoln is the first choice of the Republican Party of Illinois for the Presidency, and its delegates to the Chicago Convention are hereby instructed to use all honorable means to secure his nomination, and to cast the vote of the State as a unit for him.”

On May 16th, 1860, the National Republican Convention met at Chicago, in a vast temporary “wigwam” constructed for the occasion. The free States, Territories, and border slave States were represented by regular delegations, and the city was thronged by a multitude of zealous politicians from

all parts of the country. Since the first assembling of the Continental Congress, there had been no gathering of American citizens for equally important action. The party which, during a quarter of a century to come, was to control the affairs of the nation, was to announce its principles and purposes, and select its representative. It was to name the man to whom it would commit unmeasured responsibility.

Two days were consumed in important and interesting preliminary business, in the adoption of a platform, and in exchanges of views among the delegates which tended to simplify and shorten the final process of nomination. It was discovered that while there were six other candidates, each more or less eminent and trustworthy, the real contest lay between Seward and Lincoln, representing the East and the West. It was also believed by many that the former was the more conservative, and that the nomination of the latter would carry with it a more explicit defiance of the slave power. The widespread processes developing the strength of Mr. Lincoln before the National Convention had expressed themselves well at the Illinois State Convention, and his able friends at Chicago had little more to do than to watch the working out of the sure result. Not one of them could claim to have been "the man who nominated Lincoln," for a multitude had done that, month after month. The third day of the convention witnessed a scene of the most intense, absorbing, thrilling excitement, as if the actors in that political drama were instinc-

tively aware of the tremendous consequences of the ballots about to be taken.

It had been decided that a majority should nominate, the two thirds rule being put aside. On the first ballot the six minor candidates received complimentary votes, while Seward was given one hundred and seventy-three and one half, and Lincoln one hundred and two. It had been asserted that the New York statesman would poll very nearly his utmost strength at once, and all who were opposed to his nomination had thus their inevitable choice pointed out to them. On the second ballot they began to act accordingly, for Mr. Lincoln gained seventy-nine votes and Mr. Seward only eleven.

The feeling grew deeper, and there were almost silences over the vast assemblage, through which spasmodic bursts of cheering now and then broke out. The third ballot began, and proceeded until it was announced that Mr. Seward now had one hundred and eighty votes, and Mr. Lincoln two hundred and thirty-one and one half. One and one half more were needed to nominate him, and there was a moment of oppressive stillness until Mr. Cartter, of Ohio, sprang upon a chair and shouted that four delegates from that State had changed their votes from Chase to Lincoln. There was a great shout of relief from long suspense, responded to by a roar of cannon from without, and the nomination was declared to be unanimous.

Mr. Lincoln was in his office at Springfield when the telegraphic announcement of the result reached him. He had said that either Seward or himself



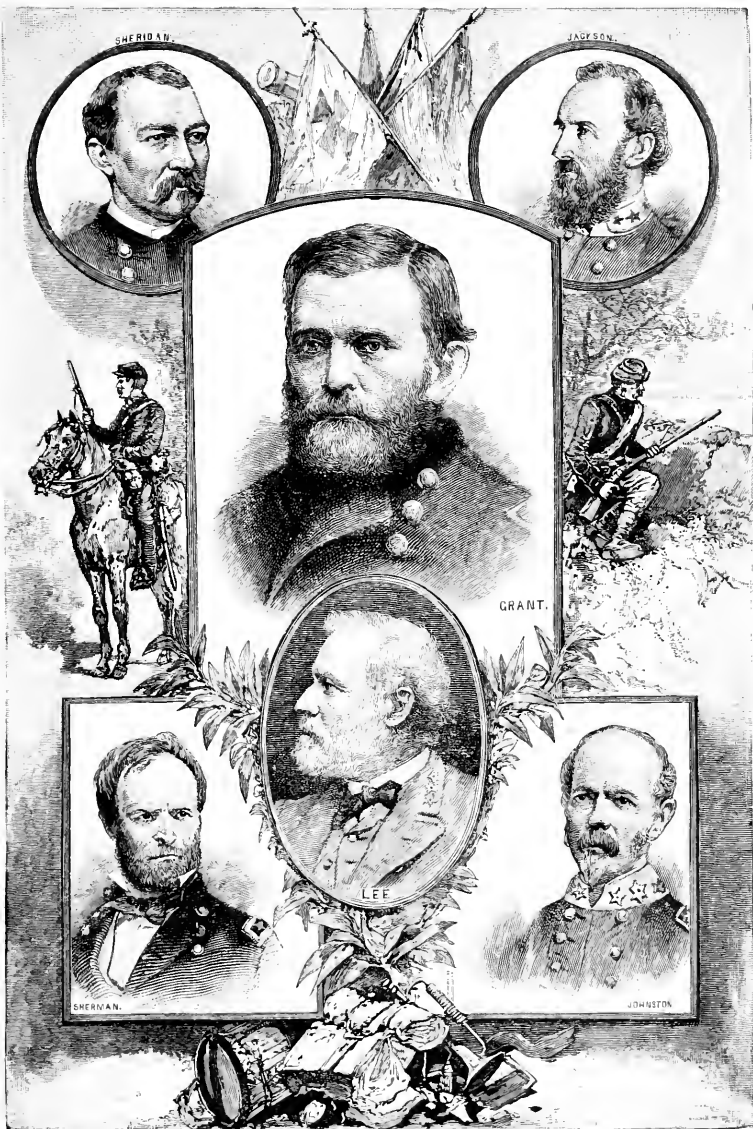
would receive the nomination. There was hardly a change in his manner as he read the despatch, but he ceased his pleasant chat with the group of friends around him, and went home to talk about the news with his wife.

The Republican platform had been carefully drawn, seeking to avoid any undue irritation of Southern feeling, but the several elements opposed to Mr. Lincoln's election persisted in asserting that the "ultimate extinction" of slavery was the animating spirit of Republicanism, well expressed in its candidate. They were not at all in error, but a part of them at once determined that they and not the nation, as a whole, would select the time and the method for its extinction. They chose the bullet rather than the ballot.

The campaign went vigorously on, accompanied, day after day, by an increasing murmur from several of the slaveholding States, that they would not abide by the probable result. Secessionism in the South paid less attention to the Presidential canvass than to its feverish preparations for a dissolution of the Union. Through the long Summer months, and through September and October, Mr. Lincoln remained quietly at Springfield, receiving a continuous procession of political pilgrims, and receiving also a mass of correspondence from all quarters which kept him well advised of whatever was going on, South as well as North. He was in no manner ignorant of the plans, purposes, and performances of the disunionists.

The election was held upon November 6th, 1860.

The popular vote was as follows : Lincoln electors, one million eight hundred and sixty-six thousand three hundred and fifty-two ; Douglas electors, one million three hundred and seventy-five thousand one hundred and fifty-seven ; Breckinridge electors, eight hundred and forty-five thousand seven hundred and sixty-three ; Bell electors, five hundred and eighty-nine thousand five hundred and eighty-one. These ballots were so distributed that Bell and Everett obtained thirty-nine electoral votes ; Douglas and Johnson, twelve ; Breckinridge and Lane, seventy-two ; while Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin obtained one hundred and eighty.



MILITARY HEROES OF THE CIVIL WAR.



## CHAPTER XIX.

*Last Days of the Buchanan Administration—The Civil War Begun—The Cotton States—The Montgomery Congress—From Springfield to Washington—The Border States—The New Cabinet—The Inaugural Address of President Lincoln.*

THE stormy interval between the election and the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln was crowded with intensely interesting events with which biography cannot deal. He had nothing to do with them except to watch, to ponder, and to prepare for the course of action soon to be required of him.

That the secession leaders contemplated civil war was manifested in many ways, an authoritative announcement of the fact being made by Governor Gist, of South Carolina, in a message to the Legislature of that State, November 5th, 1860, the day before the Presidential election, in which he declared that the institutions of the South were in danger, advised the calling of a State Convention, the purchase of arms and ammunition, precisely as if active military operations were understood to be inevitable. One month later Congress assembled, and both Senate and House contained men who were outspoken disunionists, with many more whose ultimate purpose was hardly covered by a film of prudent reserve.

President Buchanan was without power of any kind. The Republican majority in Congress bitterly distrusted him, and the Southern extremists denounced him with almost equal zeal. His own Cabinet was divided against itself, some of its members resigning because of his declarations in favor of the preservation of the Union and the armed protection of Federal property, and one, the Secretary of State, Mr. Cass, resigned because the President's Unionism did not sufficiently resemble that of Andrew Jackson. The vacant places were filled by the appointment of men whose subsequent course did honor to the man who selected them, but neither Edwin M. Stanton nor John A. Dix could then do more than sustain Mr. Buchanan in a compulsory policy of drifting, which would, at least, turn over whatever might be left of the National Executive to Mr. Lincoln, uncompromised by the hasty adoption of aggressive measures.

Congress became more fiercely, sternly, unbendingly patriotic as the hours grew darker and the storm increased, but it wisely waited the arrival of the new President, and even in its later debates the Republican leaders exercised a most commendable self-control.

The secession movement swelled fast. South Carolina declared itself out of the Union on December 20th, 1860 ; Mississippi, on January 9th, 1861 ; Alabama, on January 11th ; Georgia, on January 19th ; Louisiana, on January 26th, and Texas, on February 1st. The military operations indicated by Governor Gist began at an early day. The

United States posts and military property in Texas were surrendered, without fighting, to an armed force of secessionists on February 18th. A siege of the United States forts in Charleston Harbor began about the middle of December, and on the 26th Major Anderson was forced to abandon Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney to the disunion troops and retreat to Fort Sumter with the few men under his command. On January 10th Lieutenant Slemmer, commanding at Pensacola, the navy yard having been already lost, was compelled to abandon Forts Barrancas and McKee on the mainland and retreat to Fort Pickens.

Mr. Lincoln was not yet President, but a state of war had been prepared beforehand for him to deal with. What was called the Peace Conference, invited by Virginia, assembled in Washington in February to consider possible compromises and paths toward peace, but it was simply an amiable expression of regret that the day for compromises had forever gone by. The situation was rendered altogether complete on February 4th, 1861, by the assembling at Montgomery, Ala., of a Congress of Delegates from the seceded States to organize a permanent Confederacy. They acted with vigor, provided a provisional government for the Confederate States of America, of which they elected, February 9th, 1861, Jefferson Davis, President, and Alexander H. Stephens, Vice-President. They adopted measures for the immediate enlistment and equipment of an army of one hundred thousand men, and for the construction of ten steam gun-

boats. Their every step was a war measure, for even the moderate declarations of President Buchanan maintained the right and duty of the Federal Government to hold by force its own posts and other property within the limits of any State claiming to have seceded, and no man in his senses could expect Abraham Lincoln to be more conciliatory or more forbearing when his turn should come to speak and act. He very nearly succeeded in doing so to the minds of many of his own supporters in the steady firmness with which he fought and won his first great victory of statesmanship.

While the Montgomery government was pushing forward its preparations without an hour of hesitation, and while the siege of Fort Sumter and the raising and arming of Confederate forces went on, the future course of Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri, was as yet apparently undetermined. At the same time, the great mass of the people of the North, accustomed to peaceful ways, permitted their aversion to violence to convince them that no war had been begun, or that actual fighting could even yet be avoided.

They did not wish for war, and they would have reacted against any aggressive act of the national authorities of a nature calculated to increase the war-like feeling at the South. The people of the border slave States were, of course, very much more sensitive, and each of those commonwealths contained a body of zealous disunionists eager to lead their fellow-citizens into the Confederacy. There ap-



peared to be as yet something like a neutral belt of disputed territory between the active Unionism of the free States and the avowed secessionism of the cotton States. There were two problems in Mr. Lincoln's hands for solution. The first asked him how much of this vitally important area could be held for the Union, until the North should be aroused, with his own administration in full possession of the Executive power. The second asked him at what line the advancing forces of secession could wisely be met by corresponding force of arms. Both problems required for their solution great sagacity, great patience, with perfect readiness to understand and use opportunities.

In February, 1861, Mr. Lincoln paid a last visit to his aged stepmother, still living in Coles County. Those who witnessed the interview describe it as very affecting. As they embraced in parting, she expressed a fear that she should never see him again, for his enemies would surely kill him.

"No, no, mamma," he said, "they will not do that. Trust in the Lord and all will be well. We shall see each other again."

Among others who came to see him there was old Hannah Armstrong, widow of that Jack Armstrong with whom Lincoln had wrestled a score of years before. Since that day he had successfully defended a son of hers accused of murder, and the tie of friendship between them was little less strong than that of kinship. She, too, had premonitions of assassination, but he only smiled at her, and said:

“ Hannah, if they do kill me, I shall never die another death.”

There had been threats in abundance uttered by men of well-understood recklessness and violence of character, but Mr. Lincoln's friends, the most courageous of them, were much more disturbed by them than he would consent to be. He completed his preparations for departure to his new field of duty, leaving his affairs at Springfield in the hands of Mr. Herndon, with a request that the sign of the old law office, worn and weather-beaten as it was, should not be taken down during at least four years more.

The signs of the times were hourly growing darker. On January 9th the besiegers of Fort Sumter had fired upon and driven back the steamer *Star of the West*, bringing supplies to the garrison, but this was only one very pointed expression of the every-way manifest determination of the seceded States to maintain their position by force of arms. The contrary position taken and to be taken by the Federal Government was that no State could secede, that none had seceded, and that the Montgomery organization and its several sub-organizations were but unlawful associations of misguided individuals opposing the execution of the laws of the United States.

Mr. Lincoln set out from home for Washington on February 11th, 1861. At several places along the way he made brief responses to the crowds assembled to welcome him, but carefully avoided saying anything which could justly give offence to his

opponents, although his very reserve was declared irritating by some of his friends. Just before the railway train carried him out of Springfield, however, he uttered a few words through which the entire nation obtained a better understanding of the man upon whom its future so solemnly depended. A crowd had gathered to see him go, and a light rain was falling. He came out upon the platform of the car, and there were tears in his tremulous voice at first, but it grew clear and strong as he mastered his emotion.

"Friends," he said, "no one who has never been placed in a like position can understand my feelings at this hour, nor the oppressive sadness I feel at this parting. For more than a quarter of a century I have lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here I have lived from my youth, until now I am an old man. Here the most sacred ties of earth were assumed. Here all my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the strange, checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind. To-day I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me, I shall fail, but if the same omniscient Mind and almighty Arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail. I shall succeed. Let us pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To Him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that, with equal sincerity and faith, you will invoke His wisdom and guidance for me."

The stenographers present made varying reports of this farewell address, but this it was in substance. It was everywhere read, and produced a profound impression hardly to have been expected. He had unintentionally appealed powerfully to the religious

as well as the home-loving element of the American character, and all men and women drew instinctively nearer to him.

A large majority of the people of Maryland were Unionists, but it was a slave State, and contained a considerable body of peculiarly zealous secessionists, to whose activities were just at that time added a number of eager emissaries from the open supporters of the Confederacy. Detectives who had been making observations among the more vehement and brutal enemies of the Union, particularly in Baltimore, reported a strong probability of mob violence, or even worse, if Mr. Lincoln should unduly expose himself at that place, and the last stage of his journey to Washington was therefore performed unheralded and by night. He was in safe quarters at Willard's Hotel in Washington, early on the morning of February 23d, 1861, before anybody, but the small party of friends who accompanied him, had any knowledge that he had proceeded beyond Philadelphia. That cool and courageous men—army officers and professional detectives—united in deeming such a prudence unavoidable, offers an explanatory comment upon the kind and degree of the excitement which prevailed among large classes of the Southern people. The people of the free States failed altogether to appreciate or understand it, and the South was blindly ignorant of the really friendly and pacific feeling of the North, or of how perfectly this was represented in the heart and mind of Abraham Lincoln. Perhaps even violent men on both sides, as a rule, underestimated the impending

peril, and most men, including eminent politicians and statesmen, scouted the idea of civil war. President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy was not one of these, and attested his perception of the truth by responding to a too hopeful friend that "there will be war, and it will be long and bloody."

Mr. Lincoln had very nearly completed the important task of forming his Cabinet before going to Washington, but not until the very last did he abandon an obviously wise intention that it should contain members from the Union men of the slaveholding States. Not one of sufficient eminence could be found, and the new Cabinet assumed a decidedly sectional character, since Edward Bates, of Missouri, and Montgomery Blair, of Maryland, represented distinctly Republican forces in those States. Mr. Bates had been a candidate at the Chicago Convention.

At the head of the Cabinet, almost as a matter of right, in accordance with a long series of historical precedents, stood William H. Seward, of New York, who had received the second highest number of votes at the Chicago Convention. Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury, had long been prominent as an anti-slavery statesman, and had been a well-supported candidate at Chicago. So had Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, now selected as Secretary of War; Gideon Welles, of Connecticut, was made Secretary of the Navy, and Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, Secretary of the Interior. The public announcement and the confirmation of these nominations could not be made

until after the inauguration, but all were decided upon, with other appointments required for prompt assumption of the duties of the Executive, before March 4th arrived. The electoral votes had been counted in the presence of Congress on February 13th. Washington City was as yet a queer, old-fashioned, straggling village city, with hotel accommodations altogether insufficient for the tide of eager, anxious office-seekers and excited patriots of all descriptions, which now came pouring in upon it.

There were rumors that violence of some sort might be apprehended on the day of inauguration, and special measures of military and police guardianship of the occasion were duly taken, but the throngs which gathered to witness the solemn, sombre ceremonial contained an overwhelming majority of very determined Union men.

President Buchanan's last duty—the signing of bills passed—detained him at the Capitol until noon of March 4th, 1861. He then hastened to Willard's Hotel, and he and the President-elect rode in the same carriage through the narrow lane preserved between the densely packed masses along Pennsylvania Avenue. At the Capitol they were waited for by the Senate and House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, the Diplomatic Corps, and an unsurpassed assemblage of the leading citizens of the United States. The oath of office was administered first to the Vice-President, and then a dignified procession marched out and occupied the ample platform provided at the eastern portico of

the Capitol, in front of which had gathered a vast and silent multitude. At the foot of the flight of steps was a thin line of uniformed citizen soldiers, keepers of the peace, and all but jostling them were men who had stood there for hours, waiting to hear the declarations with which President Lincoln would take up the task before him. Among those nearest was the writer of this book.

Senator Baker, of Oregon, came forward with Mr. Lincoln, introduced him to the audience and retired. For one moment the latter stood motionless, looking out as if at the horizon. Perhaps he was looking beyond the sea of upturned faces at the battlefields which yet might be, and which he wished and still had hope might never be.

Then, in a clear, resonant voice, he began the reading of his Inaugural Address. It was a calm review of the political situation, a moderate and conciliatory statement of the rights and purposes of the Federal Government, and of his own obligations under the oath he was about to take, with an earnest, heartfelt, eloquent appeal to all the patriotism of the nation, South as well as North. It was beyond criticism in its prudence, in its firmness, in the clearness with which its condensed argument was presented, and it went out to all men with a power which could hardly be overestimated.

Both the friends and the enemies of the Union perfectly understood the attitude of the new Administration when they heard or read—

“That no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union ; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are le-

gally void ; and that acts of violence within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary according to circumstances. . . . That, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken ; and to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. . . . In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority."

The statement of law and authority and duty from which these sentences are quoted was made very full and explicit. So was an argumentative analysis of the position taken by the cotton States, the Confederate Government, and of all who might yet propose to act with them.

The appeal with which the address closed was also an argument, if it could have been accepted as a sincere utterance by the people of the South, but their angry minds were under a cloud with reference to any utterance of the man whom they had taught themselves to regard as an incendiary and an enemy. To them he said :

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'protect, preserve, and defend it.'

"I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."



The address was ended ; the oath was taken ; the President re-entered the Capitol ; the crowd dispersed, and the last act of preparation was completed for the strange and terrible ordeal upon which the nation and its chosen Chief Magistrate were entering.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Northern Slowness—The New Cabinet—Confederate Commissioners—Fort Sumter—The Waiting Policy—The Doubtful States—Washington City Isolated—The Baltimore Riot—Privateers—General Lee—The Advance into Virginia.*

THE formal inauguration of Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederate States of America took place upon February 18th, 1861, two weeks before that of President Lincoln. March 4th was signalized in Confederate annals by the adoption of the flag afterward famous as the Stars and Bars, and military preparations of all sorts were pushing vigorously forward. Something faintly resembling Southern energy was beginning to show itself at the North, and the Massachusetts Legislature passed on that same February 18th an act to increase the militia of that State, and tendering aid of arms and money to the National Government. Massachusetts was the South Carolina of the Union, and it was not until April 9th that the next free State to follow her example, Pennsylvania, passed a "war bill."

The several compromise measures elaborated by the Peace Conference, and another known as the Crittenden Compromise, were debated to death in the closing days of Congress, but no measures of a

warlike or even of a defensive nature were adopted, and President Lincoln found the powers and authorities of the Executive, including the army, the navy, and the treasury, in very much the same crippled, insufficient condition in which they had floundered during the latter months of the Buchanan Administration. The members of the new Cabinet, however, were all of them men of capacity and energy, and the new Congress, Senate as well as House, was fierily ready to sustain the President. The several secretaries hardly found time to eat or sleep during several days and nights after entering upon their duties, but strong and quickening pulses began to throb through all the departments of the National Government. Mr. Lincoln and his assistants were besieged and thronged, and all but crushed, by the hungry rush of office-seekers. The work of removal and appointment went swiftly forward, and it was eminently needful that it should do so, for the public service held an astonishing number of avowed secessionists, whose places required to be filled by men devoted to the Union. No removed secessionist could rationally complain, but not a few were absurd enough to do so, as one more evidence of the confused, chaotic state into which the minds of men had been goaded by the prolonged excitement and confusion.

The first regular meeting of the Lincoln Cabinet was held on March 9th, 1861, and the vitally important, practical military and naval question laid before it, embodied the entire question of the initiatory policy to be adopted by the Administration.

A report from the retiring Secretary of War, Hon. Joseph Holt, received by Mr. Lincoln on the morning of March 5th, contained very full representations of the forlorn condition of Fort Sumter, made by its commander, Major Robert Anderson, the same officer by whom the Independent Spy Battalion had been mustered out of service in the Black Hawk War in 1832. He now stated that his garrison had sufficient provisions for only about forty days, and that any attempt to supply or re-enforce him would probably fail, unless made by a strong naval force acting in connection with a land force of twenty thousand men, so complete and so well manned were the works of the besiegers. Much consultation with military and naval men and civilians had preceded that Cabinet meeting, and more followed. The South Carolina authorities had protested loudly and officially to President Buchanan, that Major Anderson's retreat to Fort Sumter was an act of hostility. They had regarded the coming of the Star of the West as another such act. They would surely resist its repetition, and the resulting conflict would be charged upon Mr. Lincoln as an act of violent, aggressive, invasive war. Opinions differed as to the possibility of success in relieving the fort with the means at the disposal of the War and Navy Departments. There could be little difference of opinion as to the evil effect of either success or failure upon the minds of the people of the slave States which had not yet formally declared for secession. At the same time an unresisting evacuation of Fort Sumter would not have been treated

as a military necessity, but rather as an act of cowardly weakness by all the ardent Union men of the North. The only course of action left open was one of apparent inaction, accompanied by all possible energies of preparation in every corner of the public service. The mere holding of Fort Sumter might be regarded as irritating hostility by the insurgents of South Carolina, but to the North it was in keeping with the accepted Constitutional position of the Administration. There were subsequent communications with Major Anderson, as well as with the leaders of the force besieging him, but the fort and its garrison were left to bide in patience their hour for the great service which they were to perform for the cause of the Union.

On March 12th three gentlemen arrived in Washington as commissioners on behalf of the Confederate States of America, to demand from the Government of the United States the surrender of Fort Sumter and all other posts and places in like manner held or claimed. President Lincoln could not and did not receive or recognize them, and they came and went unhindered, much to the disgust of hot-headed patriots, who rashly declared that they should have been put into jail for treason.

Somewhat more than the full time named by Major Anderson in his report to Secretary of War Holt was permitted to elapse, and every day and hour was made the utmost use of. Every navy yard and arsenal was astir, and all over the North the people were beginning to feel an unaccustomed pulse of martial ardor. In the border slave States,

East and West, the Union men were arousing to patriotic activities which promised excellent results. Something of inestimable value had thus been accomplished to offset the great advantage in point of military preparation which had been so sagaciously gained by the Southern leaders. The army of a hundred thousand men which they formally called for on March 6th was at that date, for the greater part, already very well armed and equipped, performing regular drill duty and ready to march. Nearly seven thousand, for instance, were encamped in and around Charleston, S. C. The day of sure starvation for the Sumter garrison being nearly at hand, the waiting policy of President Lincoln could not be perfectly maintained any longer, but he still exercised every precaution against appearing as an aggressor. He sent, at last, a trusty messenger to Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, to read to him the following in writing :

“ I am directed by the President of the United States to notify you to expect an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only, and that if such attempt be not resisted no effort to throw in provisions, arms, or ammunition will be made without further notice or in case of an attack on the fort.”

The provision-laden steamers, with their escort, sailed from New York the following day, but their voyage was variously delayed, and they were never to enter Charleston Harbor.

President Lincoln's notification of his purpose to feed the garrison was regarded as a declaration of war, for the Confederate chiefs were greatly in need of something which could be made to answer that

purpose. That they would do so was altogether expected by Mr. Lincoln, and he was fully prepared to act accordingly.

All things were ready, and, at half-past four o'clock on the morning of April 12th, 1861, the first gun, "the Sumter gun" of history, was fired by one of the shore batteries, and the shell struck the fort. Its explosion did no harm to the masonry, and many of the difficulties in the way of the Federal Government had vanished when that small cloud of powder-smoke had risen and floated away.

The fort replied to the concentrated fire of the powerful batteries along the shore, but the end was sure from the beginning, and on Sunday morning, April 14th, the Stars and Stripes were hauled down. The Stars and Bars quickly took their place, and the news was telegraphed to Mr. Lincoln in Washington. A Cabinet meeting was at once held, but there had been consultations while the bombardment was going on, and that afternoon a proclamation flashed over the wires to be published in the journals of Monday, April 15th, as of that date. He called upon the several States of the Union for seventy-five thousand men, to suppress unlawful combinations of persons opposing the execution of the laws of the United States in the nominally seceded States; commanded the persons composing those combinations to disperse within twenty days, and summoned an extra session of Congress to assemble on July 4th, 1861. He said :

"I appeal to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate, and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and existence of our

National Union and the perpetuity of popular government, and to redress wrongs already long enough endured. I deem it proper to say that the first service assigned to the forces hereby called forth will probably be to repossess the forts, places, and property which have been seized from the Union."

A war fever had been spreading fast among the populations of the slaveholding States which had as yet taken no final action. The future course of Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky was as yet in doubt, but that of Eastern Virginia, North Carolina, and of Tennessee west of the mountains, was not at all doubtful. Each of the three States first named was only prevented by the strong hand of military power from being speedily swept into the Confederacy, and each furnished important battlefields in the course of the Civil War. With reference to the three States last named, and especially Virginia, the plainest dictates of prudent policy required the utmost forbearance and reserve on the part of the Federal Government. Delaware contained no secession element strong enough to act.

The North responded vigorously, and the militia rallied fast. One Pennsylvania regiment, the Fifth, reaching Washington on April 18th, unarmed and unready for service. The situation of the capital, and of all that it contained, was very peculiar during a number of days of April, 1861. South of it lay Virginia, and the Legislature of that State had taken positive action on the 17th and 22d of the month, preparatory to joining the Confederacy, naming May 23d for a popular vote to confirm their decision. The Confederate flag already floated



upon the southern bank of the Potomac, and Virginia militia mounted guard at that end of the Long Bridge leading across that river into Washington. North of the city, and the narrow acres of the District of Columbia, lay Maryland, and the secessionists of that State were making a well-concerted effort to drag it out of the Union. They proposed to begin by declaring it a curious kind of neutral territory into which the militia summoned by President Lincoln could march only as invaders and wanton disturbers of the peace of the commonwealth. All their plans were upset by the overhasty mob of Baltimore, which proceeded to justify the National Government in any steps it might see fit to take, besides arousing to fever heat all the Union sentiment remaining in Maryland.

The Massachusetts Sixth Regiment was mustered on Boston Common, on April 16th, and reached Baltimore on the 19th. There had been protests against its passage through that city, and by some mismanagement or other the attempt was made by squads cooped up in street cars instead of in marching columns. The mob took advantage of the blunder and assailed the soldiers furiously. Several were killed, and a number more on both sides were wounded in the running fight which followed, but the militia broke their way through and went on to Washington. The Governor of Maryland was a Union man, but he was induced to protest, officially, against the passage of any more United States troops, while the secession movement put on the mantle of State Rights, and burned some bridges

by way of emphasizing the protest. Without any respect for this, however, the Seventh New York and the Eighth Massachusetts regiments were landed at Annapolis, on April 21st and 22d. Three weeks later, May 13th, General Butler held Baltimore with a sufficient force, but the road from the North to the capital had already been permanently opened, and Maryland had been occupied for the Union.

During the very cloudy days while Washington was isolated, the United States Arsenal and works at Harper's Ferry, on the 18th, were partly destroyed by fire, and abandoned by the mere squad of keepers on the approach of Virginia militia sent to take possession; and the great Gosport Navy Yard, at Norfolk, unadvisedly, but for a similar reason, was entirely burned up on the 20th.

Volunteer military organizations, outside of the militia, were rapidly forming in all the loyal States, and orders from the War Department went out on April 26th, to accept forty-four thousand and thirty-four of these "for three years, or during the war," and to enlist twenty-two thousand seven hundred and fourteen men for the regular army, and seventeen thousand sailors for the navy. In every State, however, swift action was now taking with reference to the militia, and the volunteer regiments continued to rally as if with an instinctive perception that more calls for men would soon be published.

On April 17th, three days after the fall of Fort Sumter, the Confederate President issued a proclamation offering "letters of marque and reprisal," under the seal of the Confederate States, to armed

privateers of all nations. It seemed an easy way of procuring a navy, and it took for granted the recognition by the world of the Confederacy as a new power, but it was counteracted two days later by a proclamation by President Lincoln, announcing that all such privateers would be "held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy." This was no empty threat, for the Federal Navy contained a number of very serviceable cruisers, and it was adding to them daily the swift steamers urged upon it by owners who dreaded the possible future work of precisely such privateers and of Confederate armed rovers.

Events were ripening fast in Missouri and Kentucky, and the Confederacy had a well-grounded hope of garnering both of them. It already held complete control of Western Tennessee and of Arkansas, and its Secretary of War and others loudly vaunted their expectation that the Stars and Bars would float over the Capitol at Washington by May 1st. That was before the tide in Maryland and Missouri was known to have turned against them, and was said without due consideration of the position of Virginia. The authorities of the old commonwealth refused to turn over the State troops to the Confederacy, or to permit the passage of its armies until after the formal action of the voters on May 23d. They made every preparation, indeed, beforehand, and among these was one which affords a perfect illustration of the great perplexities besetting President Lincoln with reference to all military plans and operations, as well as of the opposite

views of honor and duty held by officers of the army and navy. What these individual views might be, there had, as yet, been no means of ascertaining, except in the case of those who had already resigned and hurried away to Montgomery. On April 20th President Lincoln offered to Colonel Robert E. Lee the command of the Federal forces gathering, not doubting that he was as firm a Unionist as General Scott himself. He replied by accepting, instead, the command of the State forces of Virginia, with a future course perfectly well understood. Other Virginian officers of the army followed his example, while others still regarded the Union and not the State as their first duty, and served the old flag faithfully. No better example of the latter class can be named than General George H. Thomas.

The end of delay and uncertainty with reference to many matters was at hand. On May 23d, 1861, a large majority of the citizens of Virginia voted in favor of the measure which declared her to be no longer a State of the Union. The result was well known beforehand, and required no formal announcement to justify action based upon it. On the very next day, the 24th, long before all the interior counties could be heard from, the State troops were turned over to the Confederacy, and their commander entered upon his new and remarkable career. At sunset of the day of voting, however, the 23d, the drums beat in the camps of the Union regiments all along the line. Before midnight several regiments had crossed the Potomac into Vir-

ginia by the Long Bridge at Washington, others by the aqueduct bridge at Georgetown, one was on its way to Alexandria by water, and in the morning all the North was aflame with the news of the advance of the army, and of the shedding of the blood of young Colonel Ellsworth upon the threshold of the great Civil War.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Getting into Harness—A Leader of Men—Stern Warnings to Foreign Powers—Mrs. Lincoln and the Children—The President's Workshop—West Virginia—Matters in Missouri—On to Richmond—Bull Run—Five Hundred Thousand Men.*

THE course of the war for the Union can only be suggested in outline, and its great events cannot be enumerated in the narrow limits of a brief biography of its central figure. Armies marched and counter-marched, battles were lost or won, military and civil fames grew and faded, and scores on scores of volumes and an endless series of minor publications have been insufficient for completely telling the story of the days when Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States. In and through all the narrations, however, more and more clearly as the years go by, appears the great marvel that the delegates at the Chicago Convention and the voters at the election of 1860 were somehow led to select the right man for the place of trust and trial.

The crucial test of human greatness was applied to him, and he responded to it, for he arose and grew to the mental and moral stature required of him by the mighty tasks from day to day set before him.

His first achievement was that of reorganizing the

shattered machinery of the general government, and consolidating for its support all the confused, excited, wavering forces of the astonished and bewildered people of the free States. To this end the long delay afforded him by the course of Virginia and the border States was invaluable.

There were very strong men among those who stood for the Union and upheld the hands of the President. There were governors of States, editors of newspapers, senators, Congressmen, clergymen, orators, writers, whose services equalled those of generals in the field. They were by no means always in perfect accord with or approval of the action taken by Mr. Lincoln, but that was of less consequence than was the greater fact that they were utterly devoted to the same cause and worked on to the end with him, and nowhere else was this truth better illustrated than in the earlier working, the settling down to its work of his own Cabinet. Its members were all men of positive character and uncommon ability, and the very qualities which fitted them for the duties confided to them forbade them to yield implicitly to the leadership of any other man. Mr. Seward, for instance, holding the first place in the distinguished knot of national councilors, had behind him a long record of legislative usefulness, and his rare capacity had received almost perfect training in varied study and experience. His immediate admirers and followers really expected that he would and desired that he should be the guiding, controlling mind of the Administration. He was above committing the error of at-

tempting to be so, but his very position as premier invited him to express himself, urged on by the manifest perils of the situation, with an earnestness and fulness which was much better understood and appreciated by Mr. Lincoln himself than it was, then or afterward, by smaller minds that ventured to discuss and pass judgment upon the relations and consultations of the two patriotic statesmen. As to the rest, there was not a man in that Cabinet too weak to have a mind of his own, or to speak out plainly upon any proposition laid before him. Beyond a doubt, for none of them had known him well prior to March 4th, 1861, it required weeks and even months of working with Mr. Lincoln and under him before each and all gave perfect assent to the truth that, by nature as well as by the Constitution of the United States, he held the first place, and that now by the stern appointment given by the nation's fight for its life, he had become little less than a dictator.

The adjustment of the Cabinet to its several uses and the altogether unprecedented list of civil and military and naval appointments went on from day to day with steady energy. Great care was exercised in the selection of diplomatic agents to represent the Republic at the capitals and great seaports of European powers. Some of these were known to be friendly to the Union, but at the very outset there were excellent reasons why the new ministers to England and France went out carrying special instructions. The written memoranda handed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Charles Francis Adams



contained a clause which gives a very good presentation of the threatening attitude of those powers, then and afterward, and of the reason why their sympathy with the Confederacy became somewhat limited in its forms of expression. Mr. Seward wrote :

“ If, as the President does not at all apprehend, you shall find Her Majesty’s Government tolerating the application of the so-called seceding States, or wavering about it, you will not leave them to suppose for a moment that they can grant that application for recognition as an independent power and remain the friends of the United States. You may even assure them promptly, in that case, that if they determine to recognize, they may at the same time prepare to enter into an alliance with the enemies of this Republic.”

There was much difficult diplomacy in after days with England and France, rendered somewhat easier by the attitude assumed by Russia, and even by that of the German people, but through all negotiations ran the tone of those first instructions to Mr. Adams.

The Springfield home-life could not be transferred to the Executive Mansion at Washington, less than half of which could be made to bear any resemblance to a private residence. Mrs. Lincoln did her best, but there was very little home about it, although her husband agreed with her in the maintenance of all possible simplicity in the manner of their housekeeping. All the ill-natured snobbery of the country sneered at them both for that very thing. The gossips went much beyond that with reference to Mrs. Lincoln, and spread far and wide the calumny that she was in sympathy with the Con-

federacy and not with the Union. They said that she was in correspondence with the enemy, and a tempest of insulting letters were written and mailed to her, but she never saw them. By her own order, every letter addressed to her was opened by one of her husband's secretaries, now writing, and its fate was left entirely to his judgment. A precisely similar rule was made by the President himself, and a vast volume of matter went directly to the departments to which it belonged instead of to the desk of the overworked commander-in-chief. About an equally large mass of miscellaneous and often abusive penmanship went into the secretary's waste-basket.

The business arrangements and facilities of the White House were still very much as they had been in the days of Andrew Jackson. The furniture looked worn, and a large part of it was almost shabby. The annual appropriation for books, maps, stationery, and the like, for the Executive office, was liberally fixed at two hundred and fifty dollars, and the one private secretary allowed by law was given the high pay of twenty-five hundred dollars. It had, indeed, been enough thirty years earlier. This post fell, of course, to Mr. John G. Nicolay, already Mr. Lincoln's private secretary, and his assistant, Mr. John Hay, had also commenced the performance of his duties in Springfield. A department clerkship first and then an army commission provided the necessary pay for Mr. Hay, and another assistant was obtained by the appointment of Mr. William O. Stoddard to the just then almost sinecure post of Secretary to Sign Land Patents for the

President. Other clerical help was intermittently obtained from the several departments, but the headquarters of the nation—the offices of its President, and the commander-in-chief of its army and navy—would have seemed almost empty, if they had contained only these few members of his official staff. There was often noise enough, even on quiet days, for although his eldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was absent at college, the younger boys, Willie and “Tad,” were privileged to race at will through every room, including that of their father. If he ever sent them away for any racket they made, the fact is unrecorded.

The plainness, the simplicity, the absence of form and ceremony, seemed at times to bring out more vividly the tremendous uses of those unpretending offices. Anteroom and hall, and the rooms of the secretaries, swarmed almost daily with men of mark. Uniforms grew more frequent, day by day, and there were other indications that these were the quarters of a leader of armed men. Newly-invented guns, and specimens of all manner of old-time weapons offered for sale to the Government, stood leaning against the wall in corners, or lumbered the desks and tables. Even armor was brought, and small patterns of large cannon, and models of proposed gunboats and of curious contrivances which nobody but the inventor, and sometimes not even he, could explain the use of.

Through all, from day to day, the President worked on, going and coming to and from the several departments when it pleased him to do so ;

taking his meals often in his work-room ; toiling early and late ; giving his whole soul to his gigantic and increasingly terrible task, and the old shadow which had been upon his face from boyhood grew deeper and darker, and his eyes wore an almost habitual appearance of looking at something far away—something in the unpropheied future.

By the recent action of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas, there were now eleven States whose entire resources of men and materials were at the disposal of the Montgomery government. The population of these States may be roundly estimated at five and one half million whites and three and one half million blacks. The extent of the territory they occupied, its mountain ranges, its rivers, its forests, and even the nature of its coast line, no less than the martial character of its free population, and the abject subordination of its servile class, gave to the Confederate chiefs peculiar natural advantages in the war they were about to wage. After all was over, it has appeared that some of the most sagacious Southern statesmen and generals fully appreciated the nature of their strength, but others as influential evidently did not. Every important Confederate victory was gained while acting upon the defensive, while every attempt to turn and become the assailant was a mistake resulting in disaster. The first of these was the capture of Fort Sumter, which enabled President Lincoln to arouse the North, and temporarily silenced all opposition to the war measures he was preparing to adopt. Every subsequent advance of the Confederate ar-

mies, beyond their lines of defence into Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, or Pennsylvania, may be said to have cost them an army. Precisely how these errors were regarded by men who understood the matter was in later years well expressed by Lieutenant-General D. H. Hill, one of the ablest officers of the Confederate army: "The bitterness of death had passed with me before our great reverses of July 4th [1863, Vicksburg and Gettysburg]. . . . The drums that beat for the advance into Pennsylvania seemed to many of us to be beating the funeral march of the dead Confederacy."

It had no thought of dying in the Summer of 1861, and altogether the most harassing difficulties hampering the action of President Lincoln arose from the mournful fact that so large a number of Northern citizens were palsied by a half-hearted fear that the Union must perish instead, or were poisoned by a disloyal hope that it might, while jealous powers beyond the Atlantic did not conceal their desire for the dismemberment of the great Western Republic.

The first great victory won for the Union, after the call to arms, was political as well as military. It was the permanent separation of Virginia, west of the mountains, from the remainder of the State, by the spontaneous action of the people of about forty counties, whose votes on May 23d had not been given for secession. Their delegates met in convention at Wheeling on June 11th, 1861, repudiated the action of the existing State authorities, executive and legislative, and proceeded to form a provisional government.

On July 9th the new organization chose two United States Senators, who were at once admitted to seats, but not to votes in the Senate, and in due season the commonwealth of West Virginia became a State of the Union. The military operations connected with this political movement began with it. The Confederate troops sent to occupy the disaffected district were badly handled, and were outmarched, shattered, and driven out by the Union forces under General George B. McClellan. There were several smart skirmishes fought, in which the Union loss was thirteen killed and forty wounded, while the Confederates lost two hundred killed, many wounded, a thousand prisoners, and seven field pieces. Not the least important of the consequences was the sudden fame acquired by the Union commander, and this was also political as well as military in its fruitage.

Matters in Missouri, and in the Western States generally, seemed at this time to be getting along fairly well. On July 1st President Lincoln commissioned John C. Frémont a major-general of the regular army, and gave him command of the Western department, consisting of Illinois and all the States and Territories west of it to the Rocky Mountains. Little more than his commission could at first be given him, and he was sent to take charge of something like a chaos, but it contained abundant resources which only required time and patience for their development. Perhaps the most serious perils in the way of Frémont's success were that his character was impetuous rather than patient, and

that success required him to deal cautiously with delicate political and social problems for the decision of which the great masses of the people of the loyal States were not yet prepared. That he acted with energy and performed important services is undeniable, but his methods of dealing with various phases of the situation occasioned discords which terminated his career as commander of the department in the following October.

A military and political problem of the most perplexing nature was before the President in the first weeks of the Summer of 1861. Congress was to assemble on July 4th, and all the financial and other measures which he was taking were entered upon in confident anticipation of the approval of the National Legislature, but he was severely crippled in many ways without the formal declaration of that approval, and without further action for which he was preparing to ask. The Confederate Congress was to meet at Richmond, Va., on July 20th, and a loud cry was rising at the North demanding the occupation of that city in advance, that it might not become the capital of the Confederacy. There was much good sense in that shout of "On to Richmond," if there had been at the disposal of the War Department any armed force with which the march could have been made or the position occupied and held. Many newspaper editors said and believed that Lincoln had an army of seventy-five thousand men to take Richmond with, and that he was in duty bound to do so. He really had somewhat more than half that number of very good militia,

not well prepared, however, for the exigencies of a prolonged march. Only a few weeks remained of the militia term of service, moreover, and while there seemed to be a reason for giving them something more than mere camp duty to tell of on their return home, the fact that they were so soon to return almost removed them from any extended military calculations.

The Confederate forces held one important position—the Manassas railway junction—which seemed to be within striking distance, and its capture, with a reasonably good victory, might, indeed, become an opening for an advance upon Richmond. The Union army, now under command of General Irvin McDowell, was therefore ordered, and, as far as might be, prepared for an advance toward Manassas, intended to begin on July 9th, but variously delayed until the 16th. About thirty-four thousand men took part in the movement, but the duties necessarily assigned to over six thousand of them reduced McDowell's fighting strength below twenty-eight thousand, with forty-nine guns and a battalion of cavalry. A numerically superior Confederate force was encountered in what was afterward known as the battle of Bull Run on July 21st. It began with what promised to be a victory, and was reported as such, but it ended in a stunning defeat and a disgraceful panic, after which there could be no more use made of the militia army, however completely its officers and men might regain their courage. The Confederate losses in killed, wounded, and a few prisoners, were about two thousand men ;



the Union losses did not exceed three thousand, but with these went twenty-five cannon, some flags, and the victory. The importance of the engagement was incomparably more political than military. While it aroused to virulence every Northern critic of President Lincoln's Administration, it had a tremendously encouraging effect upon the minds of the Southern people, and it added marvellously to the standing which the Confederacy had previously obtained beyond the Atlantic.

When Congress assembled on July 4th, it contained a complete personal representation of all the faults which had been found with the course pursued by Mr. Lincoln up to that date. There was a small but vehement minority which accused him of doing too much, and of having transcended both the dictates of prudence and the limits of his Constitutional authority. There was also a very patriotic knot of zealots, who were ready to denounce him for having done too little, and for not having already crushed the Rebellion in its very well-defended cradle. The large majority, however, including a number of men who had not voted for him, but who now became distinguished as war Democrats, came prepared to give the Administration a most unflinching and vigorous support. He sent in a message which they were all disposed, at first, to consider with more or less deliberation. He gave his views of the ideas of "neutrality" which had been permitted to work much mischief in Kentucky, after being rudely driven out of Maryland. He explained and de-

fended his suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in certain disturbed or threatened districts. He advised that an effort should be made to shorten the war by pressing it with energy, and asked for four hundred thousand men and four hundred millions of dollars.

It seemed like much money and a large army to the minds of many representatives and some senators, until the tide of fugitives from Bull Run came pouring into the city, and it was announced that one too venturesome Congressman had gone to Richmond as a prisoner of war. The session lasted only a fortnight after that, and Congress voted five hundred thousand men and five hundred millions of dollars, with ample authority to raise and employ the men and the money, while all the previous arbitrary acts of the Administration were approved with a not at all insincere request for more.

The adjournment of the extra session left the President, for the first time, in the possession of the means for assailing with any hope of success the forces with which the able and energetic Confederate statesmen and generals were preparing to sustain their now thoroughly organized government. There were calm and capable observers in high places at home and abroad, who openly declared the opinion that no armies which could be raised, and no treasure which could be expended, would prove sufficient for the task of breaking down the seemingly solid structure presided over by Jefferson Davis and guarded by Robert E. Lee.

SEMMES

FOOTE



NAVAL HEROES OF THE CIVIL WAR.



## CHAPTER XXII.

*The Treasury—The Army—Arms and Ammunition—Blockade Runners—New Generals—General Frémont—General McClellan—The Contrabands—Timidity of the People Concerning Slavery—The Tide of Fault Finding—Lincoln a Military Student.*

THE five hundred millions of dollars voted by Congress were yet in the pockets of the people, and the ablest bankers and merchants of the nation were taken into counsel with reference to the methods to be adopted for transferring them to the Treasury. It was soon discovered that the Secretary of the Treasury had been well selected, but in every important consultation it was also found that the President himself had been a deep and successful student of financial science. He had served an apprenticeship of no small importance while a member of the Illinois State Legislature, dealing with banks and paper money and loans and credits during the trying times which preceded and followed the panic of 1837.

There was no difficulty whatever about obtaining the five hundred thousand volunteers. Nearly three hundred thousand in every corner of the loyal States had already rallied, and were eagerly offering their services. The remainder followed as fast as they

could be mustered in and much faster than military employment could be found for them.

A blockade of the Southern ports had been declared, and the received law of nations required that it should be actual and efficient, if it were not to be disregarded by the cruisers and traders of neutral powers. Foreign naval authorities had almost contemptuously asserted that a thorough blockade of so long a coast line and of so many ports was impossible, but they were speedily undeceived, and the business of blockade-running was discovered to be hazardous in the extreme. Swift steamers built and equipped expressly for that service were the only craft that could hope to carry arms and ammunition to the Confederacy or take away the cargoes of cotton, whose value was so swiftly advancing in all the European markets. Armored ships were as yet unknown.

Two important difficulties yet lay in the way of a vigorous use of the swarming and patriotic volunteers.

The first related to arming and equipping them for active field service. It included weapons, horses, wagons, tents, and a long list of minor matters. Of the obtainable arms, a large part were of diverse patterns, and most of them were soon to become obsolete. To even supply ammunition for them required the establishment of new and extensive factories, while the best workmen in the country were wearing themselves out over orders for new machinery to be employed in the manufacture of new guns. Efforts were made to purchase arms in

Europe, with a speedy discovery that all the weapons worth anything were firmly held by the arsenals of the several kingdoms, but that the Old World was a curiosity-shop of old muskets, which could be had by the United States for twice the real value of new and effective weapons. Every inventor in America felt the spur of the emergency with results which changed the infantry tactics of all the armies of the world ; but the first consequences were peculiar. The Ordnance Department of the army was wisely conservative at all times, by reason of the numberless experiments forced upon it, but had latterly become almost fanatically so in opposition to breech-loading rifles and carbines and in favor of the smooth-bore musket. A sort of barrier seemed to be put in the way of needed improvement, and the advocates of a new military era, including the inventors, appealed to the President. Specimens of new rifles and cannon came to him by the dozen, with a large variety of new shell, pistols, torpedoes, and gunboats. More than once, when the special features of a new rifle interested him, he took the trouble to try it himself. Very early on one morning of that Summer, while investigating a brace of promising breech-loaders, assisted by the writer, he and his secretary barely escaped arrest for unlawfully shooting at a mark within the limits of the great camp into which the capital had been transformed. The patrol of volunteers ran away at a very good rate as soon as they discovered whom they had undertaken to arrest, and the President looked after them, remarking :

“ Well, they might have stayed and seen the shooting.”

He was painfully aware that the army with which the war was to be fought and won was yet to be developed out of the mass of excellent materials at his disposal, and every report of every movement or attempted movement assured him that the successful commanding generals and their immediate subordinates had yet to be discovered. The governors of the several States, under various limitations and provisions of law, controlled the issue of all commissions up to the grade of colonel.

General officers, however, could be appointed only by the President, and nobody in America as yet knew much about generals. A vague idea was prevalent in the popular mind that a fine stump speaker, a first-rate lawyer, or even a man who had been captain of a militia company, and knew something about drill, would probably do well as a brigadier. In fact, a man who was to command half a dozen regiments at a time did not really need to know much about mere company matters, such as belonged to an orderly sergeant. The President did not share in this idea, for he had seen one volunteer army march itself to pieces during the Black Hawk War, and had noticed how much more in place its first commanders seemed when they afterward re-enlisted as privates. While, therefore, he was struggling with questions of arms, ammunition, and the like, he was also busily sifting the long lists of names put before him of candidates for military pay and honors. There were so many trials and fail-



ures as he went along, that when, at last, General Grant took command of the armies, his first recommendation was for the retirement of more than a hundred generals to whom he would not intrust a division or a brigade.

A number of good officers were sufficiently indicated by the records of the regular army, and these were so rapidly transferred to higher grades in the volunteer service as temporarily to almost cripple the older body. The first engagements were also a help, and the successes in Western Virginia were so fully in accord with the expectations previously entertained concerning General George B. McClellan, that his selection for the foremost position immediately followed. By his appointment and by that of John C. Frémont as major-generals of the regular army, the greatest of all the problems to be solved by President Lincoln was provided with representative men. This was the question, "What are the relations between this war and the African, and what is to be the effect of it upon slavery?"

General Frémont had been the candidate of the Republican Party for President in 1856; he was now placed in a position of vast power and responsibility, and a host of men were fully in accord with him when he declared doctrines, and attempted to take action for which the remaining population of the free States was not prepared, and against which all the wavering people of the doubtful border States would necessarily react strenuously. A proclamation issued by General Frémont declared martial law over specified areas of his district, and

threatened death to all armed enemies found within the lines. He also declared confiscation of the real and personal property of persons taking up arms against the Government, and the freedom of any slaves owned by them. Mere confiscation of lands or money did not threaten half of the political storm to be let loose by any assault upon the sacred right to own human beings, but Frémont became at once the representative man of the extreme anti-slavery wing of the Republican Party. The President incurred the most caustic criticism from many of his oldest friends and supporters when he overruled the declarations of the general commanding the Western department. He did so, however, and disagreements upon that and other subjects led to a change of commanders before the end of October.

There seemed to be good reasons for believing that no mistake had been made in the selection of General McClellan for a position which speedily took the form of second in command under the President, the Constitutional commander-in-chief. He was admirably fitted for the great undertaking of bringing into working order the vast mass of men and war materials so lavishly placed at his disposal. He assumed the command on July 27th, 1861, and surrounded himself, aided by the President, with the very flower of the educated and trained officers of the regular army. The vitally important department of the quartermaster-general in particular speedily acquired a marvellous efficiency, while the Ordnance Department proved that its conservatism did not disable it from the performance of what to

outside military critics bore almost the semblance of magic.

The President's hand was everywhere felt, and it was only a little while before many of the men who felt it began to murmur that it was too busy, and that he ought to delegate to others more perfectly the work which he had selected them for. There would have been more reason in the murmurs and in their newspaper echoes, if there had yet been any means afforded him for proving the wisdom of his selections. Only active and prolonged campaigning could do that, and this had not yet come. It was slow in coming, and the slowness aided the further processes of selection. Mr. Lincoln adopted for his guidance the rule "by their fruits ye shall know them," and applied it to his subordinates with a watchfulness of which, perhaps, they were not altogether mindful. Day after day and night after night he gave tireless study to his maps of the several military positions, connecting with each the voluminous despatches supplied by the War Office. He read books on military science and the histories of other wars. He took into counsel not only General McClellan, but also the best military scholars whom he could call to his assistance, and yet there were journalists who testified to their own capacities by asserting that a newly-graduated West Point cadet knew more about war than he.

At the very outset of military operations a rapidly increasing difficulty began to present itself. The days of theorizing upon the slavery question had passed away. The African bondsmen in every dis-

trict occupied by Union troops took it for granted that their bonds were broken. Long lines of escaped slaves came straggling into the Union camps with a clear idea that the war had suspended, if not abolished the Fugitive Slave Law.

General B. F. Butler, for his district, declared that these people were the military basis of the enemy, and were therefore "contraband of war," no more to be restored than a rifle, a case of ammunition, or a mule. Everybody could see the point of that decision, and the colored people escaping through the lines became "contrabands," much to the relief of the political situation. Nevertheless, their coming and presence kept before the nation the irritating question, "Is this a war for the Union or for the abolition of slavery?"

Only a minority of the Northern people, fairly well defined by the Presidential ballots of 1860, were as yet prepared for any line of action which looked beyond the preservation of the Union. A large part of the majority believed that the institution of slavery must be carefully respected in order to save the Union and regain peace, and this political element shortly began to regard General McClellan as its representative. The other wing of the majority required a severe process of education, through trials and reverses, before they would be ready to unite with the Republican Party proper in sustaining Abraham Lincoln in abolishing slavery as a war measure necessary to the saving of the Union. The fact that they had not yet so been educated in 1861 was the main reason why the proclamations of

General Frémont in the Western department threatened such serious mischief. That he had exceeded his lawful authority was really of less importance than the fact that the people would not sustain him or the President in declaring the freedom of slaves as a penalty of rebellion against the Government of the United States.

If the field of present and future campaigns, East and West, including the coasts of the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, the rivers and the mountain ranges, with the present and prospective military condition and operations of the Confederate armies, called upon Mr. Lincoln for profound and unwearying study, his heart and brain were almost as severely taxed by the demands which came from multitudinous pens and voices within the loyalist areas north of the Potomac and the Ohio.

At first he made an attempt to keep the run of the leading journals, and a sort of digest was daily prepared for him, but he had no time to look at it, and quickly abandoned the entire effort as useless. He knew what was in the army despatches and in the correspondence of the State Department. The opinions of nameless and numberless writers concerning what they knew or did not know of the same mass of information were of less value, because of the tumultuous uncertainty which pervaded the minds of all men. That the President should be able to discover sound reasons for any conclusion whatever upon the swift procession of questions presented to him was of incomparably greater importance.

Moreover, not only was he thoroughly acquainted with the nation which had made him its ruler, but he was in daily, almost hourly, conversation with representative men of every rank and grade and section. He obtained his impressions of the popular thought and will from the sore-hearted and the troubled, even from the angry and discontented, as well as from the strong, the hopeful, and the enthusiastic. A multitude who undertook to instruct, advise, threaten, or denounce him through the mails, were as the journalists, for he had no time to so much as glance at the hundreds of letters which poured in upon him daily. Any communication relating to matters of business with the Government was at once referred to its proper department or bureau by the secretary in charge of the mail. Any other, with a few exceptions left to his discretion, went at once, as has been said, into his overflowing waste-basket.

Through the Autumn months of 1861 the great ferment in the popular heart expended itself mainly in the work of hurrying forward volunteers for the army, and its pressure was less felt by the ruler who was shortly expected to crush the Confederacy with the men so sent, whether or not his generals were ready to lead them against the enemy.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*The Army of the Potomac—Retirement of General Scott—Western Dissatisfaction—The Committee on the Conduct of the War—Wearisome Delays—An Advance at Last—The Merrimac and Monitor—The Trent Affair.*

THERE was a very respectable force gathered behind the lines which defended the capital when, July 27th, 1861, General McClellan took command. It consisted of about fifty thousand men, volunteers and regulars, pretty well armed, if not well disciplined, and was amply sufficient to hold those lines against any force which the Confederacy was as yet prepared to throw against them. New troops poured on from the North in such a tide that three months later, on October 27th, 1861, the general was able to report that he had under his command, in all, over one hundred and sixty-eight thousand men, of whom more than one hundred and forty-seven thousand were fit and ready for active service in the field. Such a report seemed like a promise of immediate battles and victories, and so it would have been, if it had not been speedily followed in long succession by additional reports, which testified with increasing clearness to the one fatal defect in General McClellan's military genius. Great as were his abilities, high as was his opinion of many

of his officers and of most of his men, he was morbidly disposed to overrate the numbers and the fighting capacity of the forces at any time or place opposed to him. The Confederate strength in front of him in the Winter of 1861-62 could not have been much more than one third of his own in line of battle, but nothing could convince him that he was not kept upon the defensive by superior numbers. What afterward proved trustworthy evidence had at the same time convinced the President of the real state of affairs, and his estimate of the commanding general began to receive modifications. That formed by the nation and the army was at first greatly exaggerated, and was brought to a correct standard only by a long course of events. Even to the end of the war and afterward a host of men believed Mr. Lincoln to have treated McClellan badly, but a careful perusal of the latter's official despatches, his private letters since printed by his friends, and of the official reports and despatches of the Confederate generals opposed to him, must convince any candid student that the President's course toward his young and brilliant military subordinate was to the last degree prudent and forbearing.

During the first three months of General McClellan's presence at Washington, he was nominally under the direction of Lieutenant-General Scott, and perhaps the first intimation of his own overestimate of what was expected of him was given by the scanty respect which he paid to the aged veteran. On October 31st General Scott was retired



at his own request, and McClellan was left without any official superior except the Secretary of War and the President. Ten days earlier had occurred the first important reverse to the Union arms since Bull Run ; it was the battle of Ball's Bluff, a blundering engagement for which nobody seemed to be responsible, but which threw away forty-nine men killed, one hundred and fifty-eight wounded, and seven hundred and fourteen prisoners and missing. The importance of the engagement lay mainly in its effect upon the war spirit of the South, in the spirit of criticism which it aroused at the North, and in Congress, and in an increased timidity of movement on the part of the commander of the Army of the Potomac.

The demand made by the general for a larger army was soon responded to on all sides by very pertinent inquiries as to the use he was making of the forces already in his hands.

The West, moreover, was stirred with a feeling of resentment upon understanding how low an estimate he put upon the importance of military operations in the Mississippi Valley, and of the number of men to be spared for them from the great field under his immediate supervision. It was a resentment which greatly strengthened the position of General Frémont before the people, and which was afterward deeply felt in political affairs. The popularity of General McClellan was limited to the army which served under him, and mainly to the Atlantic States, as was evidenced by votes cast at the polls in 1864. In that same year, at the Republi-

can National Convention, it was discovered that the dissatisfaction with the action of the Administration, beginning in 1861, had by no means died away, and that the Missouri and part of the Kansas delegates were bitterly opposed to Mr. Lincoln's renomination.

It was impossible for him to please everybody, and he made no special effort to do so. Congress came together for business in December, 1861, but nearly all of its membership were in Washington at a much earlier date. Every Senator and Congressman was burdened with the clamorous demands of his most active constituents for appointment to office, civil or military. He also had duties relating to the troops from his State and district. Over and beyond all these he had his own ideas as to how the war should be carried on, and felt that he must impress these upon the President and have them carried out by the army. It was a great relief to the overworked Chief Magistrate when, shortly after the opening of the session, Congress decided not to advise, instruct, or criticise him individually, or, so to speak, "in Committee of the Whole." Very wisely they appointed, for continuous confidential conference with him, a Committee on the Conduct of the War, composed of seven of their best men, with power to investigate anything whatever in any camp, or column, or at sea, or in any department. That committee, as was at once foreseen by the President, provided him with a board of clear-headed, patriotic, and sympathizing counsellors, to whom he could explain his policy and

action that they might answer for him on the floors of Senate or House. That they would find fault with him and his generals, that they would discern defects and call loudly for amendments, did not in any wise detract from the eminent services they were to render to him and to the nation. Their inquiries and responses aided greatly in making the public understand better the difficulties under which he was working, and in particular the relations between him and McClellan and other generals in the field.

The nation knew that it was expending vast sums of money, and that it had a really large and capable army in the field. Its attention and criticism was very correctly concentrated upon the Army of the Potomac, as the demand for practical results grew louder and more indignant. It was a just demand, and out of it grew a long and acrimonious controversy, one of the earlier results of which was to make General McClellan the political figure-head of the combined elements of the miscellaneous opposition to the Administration. One very able and active set of patriots united in condemning the general for not advancing, and the President for not forcing him to advance on pain of removal. The opposite faction could hardly express their vehement disapproval of a civilian President's impertinence in presuming to meddle with the scientific war carried on by a military genius who had created an army—they said he had—and then asked for another to create before doing anything more than parade the first.

Between these two extremes lay the great mass of men who understood with the President that he must make every movement with thoughtful prudence, and who also were able to appreciate as more or less praiseworthy the overwhelming sense of personal responsibility which almost unnerved McClellan. He had never yet commanded in a general engagement, and General Grant himself, in his memoirs, tells of his own trepidation when such a duty first came to him. Other great commanders have left behind them similar testimony.

All Winter long the storm of criticism continued, and all Winter long the President urged the general to push forward and find the enemy. A positive command to move was given in February, but the nominal preparations for obeying it broke down so completely that there was almost a personal altercation between the civil and military chiefs.

A few days later, early in March, it was discovered that the Confederates had wearied of maintaining a useless army in front of the Union lines and had retreated southward, probably toward Richmond. Instantly all men understood that a forward movement might have been made with success at any time, and that the enemy had won a campaign of much value to them by a bravado. Behind it they had organized their armies, consolidated their Confederacy, and strengthened their relations with European powers.

The Union losses in camp, by sickness, desertion, and death, had been larger than they would have been in a battle as bloody as the one fought later at

Gettysburg, so that nothing had been saved—not even honor—and the loyal North was angry. So was the President.

General McClellan at once called a meeting of his corps commanders, March 13th, 1862, and proposed to them a plan for an advance upon Richmond, which met with their approval. He sent it to the President, and it was instantly returned with his written acquiescence, as if to silence forever the clamor raised by some loose tongues that he had marred by interference the plans for activities before presented.

With the retreat of the Confederate army, and with the Union Council of War of March 13th, 1862, the first campaign of the Civil War may be said to have terminated, very nearly on a date corresponding with the expiration of the first year of President Lincoln's official term. It seemed to the people of the United States as if they had done wonders, and had endured many things during a long time, and that for pay they had only seen the Confederacy grow stronger, more defiant, apparently more assured of permanence. What they did not know or acknowledge, however, was the great fact that the twelve months which then closed their record had witnessed the entire success of the President's policy in the border States, securing for the Union Maryland, Missouri, West Virginia, and probably East Tennessee and Kentucky. At the same time, the inferior financial and other resources of the Southern States had made the drain upon them a serious loss of power, while the North had

suffered little more than annoyance and anxiety, ending the year with more men and more money and more resources of every kind than it began with. That this was understood by many Confederate statesmen and generals was not known until all was over, nor that they were also aware that their hold upon their servile colored population was all the while relaxing. There could not possibly have been any result of the Civil War which would not have left the institution of slavery in a dying condition, if not dead; but this truth had not become plain to the minds of men in the Spring of 1862.

The great events of Mr. Lincoln's first year as President had not all occurred upon the land. One Summer day he had been called upon by a gentleman named C. S. Bushnell, who wished to show him a model and plans of a remarkable new sea monster. It was a revolving gun tower, mounted upon a low-lying armored hull, over which ordinary waves might dash at will. It had been said to look like a cheese-box on a raft. Mr. Lincoln said that he knew little about ships of war, but he knew something about flat boats, and added that this boat was flat enough. He quickly understood its merits, however, obtained the appointment of a naval board for its examination, and was instrumental in securing for the agent of the inventor a contract for the construction of one of the new "monitors" for trial. She was completed and equipped just in time for a trial which no prophet had dreamed of. During the same months the busy Confederates at

Richmond had taken the strong hull of an old United States cruiser, and had turned it into a powerful ram, armored heavily with sloping shields of railway iron. They called it the *Virginia*, dropping its old name of *Merrimac*. On March 8th, 1862, it steamed out into Hampton Roads, and the United States warships lying there found themselves powerless to harm it or to resist its destructive attacks. They went down before it, and the days of the old wooden navies of all the earth were numbered. The news of the great disaster in Hampton Roads sent a thrill of dismay throughout the North. There was, apparently, nothing to prevent the *Virginia* from steaming up the Potomac to destroy Washington City, or into the harbor of New York or Boston upon a similar errand. A black night followed, and the next day the *Virginia* came out again from a sort of rest that it had taken and proposed to continue the work it had so terribly begun. It was met by the *Monitor*, just arrived, and the duel between them which followed became the most famous and important sea-fight in modern naval history. The message sent out to the country and the world at the close of it was that something better than the *Virginia* must be constructed before any fleet or harbor of the Union need be imperilled. Mr. Lincoln is said to have remarked that he was "very glad that he had given the *Monitor* a lift." He might well be, for without his aid she would not have kept that strange appointment for a trial in Hampton Roads.

The other great naval event did not include any

fighting, but it was of unsurpassed importance. The Confederate Government entertained high hope of the aid, open or secret, which it was to obtain from European powers jealous of the United States. The attitude of the English ruling classes, with her commercial rivalry, seemed to encourage the hope in her case, while France, her ally, or, rather, Napoleon, master of France, held a position in Mexico which was believed to make him a ready assailant of the Republic upholding the Monroe doctrine.

Southern emissaries, private and official, had worked busily in Europe before the Sumter gun was fired, but they had accomplished nothing definite, and so in the Autumn of 1861 two of the most distinguished chiefs of the Confederacy were sent out as commissioners, with ample powers to represent and advocate the cause of the proposed new American nationality, and to obtain assistance for it, or, at least, its formal recognition. Mr. Mason, of Virginia, and Mr. Slidell, of Louisiana, had been members of the Senate of the United States, and the terms for which they had been elected to that body had not yet expired. They managed, late in October, to make a perilous voyage from Charleston, S. C., to Havana, Cuba. Here they were received cordially, and obtained a passage to St. Thomas in the British mail steamer *Trent* early in November. They supposed themselves beyond interference, but their movements had been well watched, and on November 8th, the *Trent* was stopped at sea by the United States cruiser *San Jacinto*, Captain Charles Wilkes commanding. In



spite of the stormy protests of the British officers, and of the commissioners themselves, the latter were forced to change their quarters to the cabin of the *San Jacinto*. They were not black men, but they had been captured as "contraband of war," and the weak spot in the legality of the action of Captain Wilkes was afterward declared to be that he neglected to carry the *Trent* before a regular court for adjudication as a prize taken in the act of carrying contraband matters. No harm was done to persons or property. The *San Jacinto* steamed away to Boston, where she arrived on November 24th, to deliver her two human prizes to the keepers of Fort Warren. The North rang with praises of Captain Wilkes. Congress gave him a vote of thanks; he was the hero of the hour, but President Lincoln and his counsellors were sorely puzzled as to what they were to do with the pair of captives, and with the serious questions of international law involved in their forcible removal from a British mail steamer. Hardly less perplexing was the position of the Government of Great Britain. All England was boisterously angry, but her statesmen did not desire a war with the United States, even with France as an ally. They knew that such a war meant a convulsion of the entire world, just then, with no prophet to tell them the end of it all. While adopting, therefore, a tone toward the United States which was made only prudently firm by the help of Prince Albert himself as his last good work, the British ministry signified a willingness to help the United States out of the difficulty the zealous

seaman had rashly forced his country into. The two commissioners were transferred once more to British guardianship ; the English people declared their honor satisfied ; the American people grudgingly assented to a policy which avoided a war with England, and it was only a little while before Captain Charles Wilkes found himself a rear admiral.

The entire " Trent affair," as it was called, bore good fruit at home and abroad in the shape it assumed of a startling warning of the ease with which the peace of nations and prosperity of the civilized world might be shattered by war. The Confederate commissioners had been set forth as dangerous persons, and the possible uses of their mission had been sharply cut down.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Washington and Richmond—The Peninsula—The Civil Power and Military Subordination—The Army of Virginia—Successes in the West—Pope's Campaign—The Union League—McClellan and Antietam—The Proclamation of Emancipation—General Burnside in Command—Battle of Fredericksburg.*

THE great plan for an advance of the Army of the Potomac agreed upon by General McClellan and his corps commanders, and approved by President Lincoln, provided for what is known in the military history of the Civil War as the Peninsular campaign.

The city of Washington was the political capital of the United States, and represented the civil and military strength of the Union. Its capture and permanent occupation, or its destruction, would have been the severest possible blow to the supremacy of the National Government. Second only in importance would have been the loss of Cairo, at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi, carrying with it the control of the navigation of those rivers. The war in the West swept southward of the latter point at an early day, and a stronghold for the control of the Mississippi was created at Vicksburg. Confederate armies were wasted in repeated efforts to threaten, if not to actually assail Washington,

and the most plausible excuse ever made for them was that in this manner the best defence was made of the Richmond lines and the State of Virginia. The first work performed by the Union volunteers, under exceedingly competent direction, was the construction of works around the national headquarters, line within line, which would have proved insurmountable, if even moderately well defended, but the very extent of which required a large force for their effective occupation.

The capital of the United States was, therefore, in one sense, a frontier post, and the capital of the Confederacy was similarly circumstanced. Army men said that the military heart of the Confederacy was at Atlanta, Ga., but if at any stage of the war Richmond had fallen, the fate of Atlanta would have become of less importance.

The removal of the Army of the Potomac to its new field of operations on the James River began at once, a sufficient force being left for the protection of Washington. Precisely what might be a sufficient force for that purpose, and by whom it should be immediately directed, became one of the many points of difference between General McClellan and the commander-in-chief. The most important point of all was the dimness with which the former perceived that he was not himself the commander-in-chief, intrusted with a supervisory inspection of civil and political as well as of army matters. Perhaps the point next in prominence was the perfection with which he embodied the notion prevalent over large areas of the North, that

the Army of the Potomac was the army, and that its operations were the war. It was central ; its commander was the ranking officer, and must continue to be so ; but the President had several armies and several fleets to direct in the year 1862, and he was not disposed to permit any breaking down of the fundamental law of the nation that the military power is subordinate to the civil. Many men forgot that law altogether, in the excitement of the hour, and bitterly blamed Mr. Lincoln for tenaciously maintaining it.

The President urged, vehemently, that the campaign against Richmond should be pushed with all possible vigor. It is now known from Confederate records that if his orders had been obeyed there was no force in McClellan's front capable of stemming his march. Now, as before, however, his abilities as a commander were hampered and crippled by his morbid overestimate of his antagonist. Delay followed delay, while the Confederate generals gathered precisely the power which McClellan had imagined them to possess at the outset. He demanded more men, and all were given him that could be given him, but the campaign dragged, while the volunteers died rapidly of malarial diseases, or were shipped northward to recover the health sacrificed in pestilential camps. All the opposition to the Lincoln Administration united, for political reasons, in ascribing the continuous and final failure of the Peninsular campaign to the President, who had "meddled" with the plans of its military director, and who had failed to give him troops

enough to win the required victories with. A large part of the Army of the Potomac, and several, but not all of its corps commanders, sided very naturally with their chief.

That Mr. Lincoln took a deep, almost an absorbing interest in the operations of that army is true. As early as May 11th, 1862, he went down to pay it a visit ; he was afterward in daily communication with its commander, to whom he gave all the support in his power to give. A full understanding of the position assumed by that commander can best be obtained from a study of his own despatches and private letters. His attitude as a political leader, with reference to the most important question of the day, was sufficiently well expressed in one passage of a letter of advice and instruction written by him to the President on July 7th, 1862. He said :

“ Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder as in other cases.”

Little fault was to be found with such a declaration, but it illustrated the fact that here was a sort of counterpoise to the action taken and the doctrines declared by General Frémont in the West. The letter was written six days after the bloody battle of Malvern Hill, in which the troops under McClellan had gallantly defeated the last attempt of the Confederate forces to interfere with their retreat from before Richmond.

The campaign was over, having resulted in a failure which had irritated and disheartened the nation,

but General McClellan was eager to make another attempt, and was asking for such supplies of men and materials as the War Department was not prepared to send.

The attention of the nation had not been altogether absorbed by the Virginia campaign during the long months of its advance and retreat. A force under General Burnside had made a permanent occupation of the coast of North Carolina, only the port of Wilmington requiring any further blockading. In April, New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississippi had been brilliantly won back for the nation. As early as February 16th the capture of Fort Donelson had greatly increased the already growing reputation of General Grant, and the first week of April had closed with the repulse by the army under his command of the Confederate forces under Johnston and Beauregard in the hard-fought battle of Shiloh. On June 6th, with the capture of Memphis, the Mississippi River was opened to that point. Kentucky and Tennessee, west of the mountains, were temporarily cleared of Confederate armies. There had been many minor successes in all directions, but the heart of the nation was sick and angry over the failure to capture Richmond.

No fault could be found with the Army of the Potomac. Grandly had it earned its name as the first army of the Republic. It contained a full proportion of Western as well as of Eastern men before the close of the campaign, and had become thoroughly national and representative. Neither the Army of the Cumberland nor the Army of the Ten-

nessee had as yet won the places they were yet to occupy. Western journals remarked, however, that the fighting done in the Mississippi Valley was carried on, apparently, to bring out new generals for commands in the East, and at the end of the war there seemed to be some point in the assertion, considering what was done with Halleck, Pope, Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan.

There were increasing reasons why the command of the Army of the Potomac could not longer be left, unreservedly, in the hands of General McClellan. The vigorous effort made, politically, to shift all blame from his shoulders to those of the President, rendered it impossible to yield to his demands without in a manner confessing the justice of the accusations so loudly uttered and repeated by the opposition journals and echoed derisively in Europe. It was determined to abandon for the present the Peninsular operations, and to withdraw the Army of the Potomac, and the process of withdrawal offered an apparent means for diminishing the position of General McClellan without so direct a removal as should do manifest injustice and place the Administration in a false light.

The attempt to bring the military power into better subordination to the civil began in July, by the appointment of Major-General Henry W. Halleck to the hitherto unknown post of general-in-chief. He was really made the military adviser of the President and the Secretary of War. In the latter office Mr. Cameron had already been succeeded by Edwin M. Stanton.



There were many perplexities in the question as to who should succeed to the command of the Army of the Potomac. Its own corps commanders were capable officers, but not one of them stood sufficiently above the rest in acknowledged capacity, and they were severally averse to accepting what was plainly a perilous distinction.

An effort to reduce the difficulty was made, while the removal of the army from the Peninsula was in progress, by organizing what was called the Army of Virginia, and by placing it, July 26th, 1862, under Major-General John Pope, an officer of distinction and of proved capacity, whose services in the West had kept him away from the existing complications on the Potomac.

The Army of Virginia at first consisted mainly of the troops assigned to the defence of the Washington lines, and the several detachments of the old Army of the Potomac, on arrival, drifted into it under General Pope's command. He had no time, however, to get his resources well in hand before he was called upon to fight a series of severe engagements with the Confederate army under General Lee, set free from its previous duties before Richmond. The troops fought well, but there were serious reverses, ending with the bloody battle of Manassas on August 30th. There had been loud murmurs against what was deemed the Administration's unjust shelving of General McClellan, and it was openly asserted that some of his corps commanders, and even the men themselves, were more than willing to have General Pope defeated. The entire

subject was afterward sifted vigorously in the case of General Fitz-John Porter. Whether or not he or any other officer failed of doing his duty, the reported bad results of the battle of Manassas drew from a part of the army a plain demand for the restoration of General McClellan to the command in the field. He had superintended the transfer of his troops until August 24th, had then reported to General Halleck for orders, and on the 27th had made his headquarters at Alexandria, forwarding re-enforcements to General Pope. He had not been formally removed, but he and the nation well understood that he was, and for some time had been under a cloud.

The army was in better condition than many were willing to believe after the hard fighting under General Pope, and when General McClellan resumed command, September 2d, 1862, it took form readily once more as the Army of the Potomac. As the Army of Virginia disappeared in this manner, General Pope simply ceased to command it. He had served his country well, but the emergency left him temporarily without a command.

The day after General McClellan resumed the direction of operations, he received information that the Army of Northern Virginia, under General Lee, was about to cross the Potomac into Maryland. The crossing took place near Leesburg, on September 4th and 5th, and the Army of the Potomac, with its re-enforcements, at once pushed on up the river to meet once more its old antagonist.

The year 1862 had thus far been a time of unceas-

ing trial to Abraham Lincoln. His heart had been terribly wrung in February by the sickness and death of his favorite child Willie. He had been compelled to turn from watching his dying child to consider matters of war and State, and to listen to the wail which went up from a host of mourners in every corner of the land. He better understood and more deeply felt the sorrows of others after his own bereavement, and he grew perceptibly older within a very few weeks. He could not but hear the voices continually raised against him in patriotic indignation or in unpatriotic denunciation, and he was fully aware that his administration must obtain moral as well as military successes, if it was to finally triumph. With a very manifest prudence, he was now watching for an opportunity to combine the two. His contest with General McClellan had not at any time been separated in his mind from his past and present and coming conflict with the conservative or pro-slavery sentiment which had selected the most prominent Union general for its political representative. Congress had strengthened his hands, having passed on March 13th and on July 16th, acts which gave permanent effect to General Butler's idea that escaped or captured slaves were "contraband of war." Near the end of July, just after putting General Pope in command of the Army of Virginia, and hopeful of immediate victories sufficient for his next purposes, Mr. Lincoln summoned a special meeting of the Cabinet. He read to them the greatest State paper ever signed by a President of the United States as an act of

the Executive alone. It was the Proclamation of Emancipation.

Mr. Seward, and others of the Cabinet, while fully approving of the measure, advised its postponement until the hoped-for victories should actually be obtained and reported, and to this the President readily assented.

During those same months a very different political movement had begun. So large a part of the most vigorous anti-slavery workers and voters were in the several columns and camps of the army as officers or privates, that the Republican Party was half-disorganized, and there were fears of defeat in the Autumnal elections. The Confederacy had received its most efficient primary help from secret organizations commonly described as one—the Knights of the Golden Circle—and these were still in great activity both at the North and South. Similar societies had a wide existence among the white and colored Union men of the South.

The idea was adopted on behalf of the nation, and the Union League of America was instituted in the Summer of 1862. It began with a central committee of twelve carefully selected men, called the permanent Grand Council, with power to summon Grand Councils of Delegates, to organize State Councils and Local Councils all over the land. The plan and system spread like a prairie fire, and the League shortly became the bone and sinew of the Republican Party, and the political right arm of the Lincoln Administration.

In every city, and town, and hamlet, its member-

ship constituted a well-drilled, disciplined, enthusiastic civil army, a reserve force sustaining the army in the field, and ready to obey the same commander-in-chief.

General McClellan led the Army of the Potomac to meet the Army of Northern Virginia. The first collision at South Mountain, September 14th and 15th, was claimed by the Confederates as a drawn battle, but it was not so, for every fight which they did not positively win was a defeat to them. On the 17th was fought the bloody battle of the Antietam, and General Lee's invasion of Maryland was over. He had so nearly secured a drawn battle this time that General McClellan, although heavily reinforced, refused to follow him closely. His unmoled retreat across the Potomac answered other purposes than his own, however. As soon as it was understood and criticised throughout the country, it prepared the popular mind for the subsequent course of the President with reference to General McClellan. At the same time it enabled Mr. Lincoln to say, as he afterward did to Mr. F. B. Carpenter, the artist: "When Lee came over the river, I made a resolve that when McClellan should drive him back—and I expected he would do it some time or other—I would send the Proclamation after him."

It was issued accordingly, September 22d, 1862, as soon after the battle as the confirmed news of a victory appeared to be sufficient for bearing so tremendous a political weight.

It named a day, January 1st, 1863, when all

slaves in States and parts of States named as in insurrection against the National Government should become free, unless the people of the described areas should sooner resume obedience to the laws of the United States. All men knew that no such return would take place, and that therefore the act was already final.

A storm of mingled approval and condemnation greeted the Proclamation at the North, but the deed was done, and the condemnation was too late, while the approbation and acquiescence would surely increase with time. There were loud voices declaring that the army, volunteering to defend the Union, would not consent to fight for the abolition of slavery, but camps, and marches, and battlefields had served as a practical school in which the soldiers had been taught to approve heartily of any sort of vigorous war measure. To free the slaves would cripple the Southern armies, and all the Northern riflemen were quite willing to have it so. Only in the Army of the Potomac did any commander deem it needful to issue any general order discountenancing undue discussion of political questions. It had not been called for, except by the loose talk of one or two insubordinate officers of small account, and its greatest significance was that it did not contain any support of the Emancipation policy. It left General McClellan undisturbed in his political position as the representative man of the Opposition. That he should be so was manifestly prejudicial, but it was equally manifest that he could not be displaced without evident cause of

a strictly military nature plain to the eyes of the nation.

The President shortly issued another proclamation, declaring the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in certain specified districts and cases. It was in its nature supplementary to the other, and was greeted with fierce denunciations of the dictatorial tyranny which appeared prepared to stop at nothing in its determination to save the Union and crush the Confederacy.

During the first week in October, Mr. Lincoln visited the army in its camps, chatted with officers and men, held long conferences with their commander, and returned to Washington on the 6th, leaving behind him positive orders for an immediate advance and a dashing campaign. It was twenty days later before McClellan began to move his troops, and they were not all across the Potomac until November 2d. They were said to need rest greatly, although more than a third of them had not been in any of the fighting, and although the beaten Confederates seemed not to ask for any repose, but kept up their marching strength very well. A full month wasted in such an opportunity as followed the battle of the Antietam explained to the country the military reasons for the removal of General McClellan, and on November 9th he was succeeded by General Ambrose E. Burnside. This officer, of acknowledged merit and patriotism, had made a distinct record of success in North Carolina, but he was now called upon for a performance to which he was not equal.

The plan for a forward movement previously agreed upon continued in force, its first orders, between November 7th and 9th, having been issued by General McClellan. It required; even when afterward modified by General Burnside, above all things, rapidity of action. The President had so declared with great distinctness, but the plan was followed without its vital element, and the severe defeat of the battle of Fredericksburg resulted on December 13th. It was an unnecessary battle, but the losses of the victors were heavy for them to bear, and both sides were by it deterred from undertaking a Winter campaign. The military year was closed in the East. In the West it had witnessed the long series of battles, and skirmishes, and marches, which terminated in midwinter with the brilliant movements which placed the army under General Grant in the rear of and threatening to besiege Vicksburg.

The political year, in spite of the activities of the Union League, had witnessed a severe reaction in several of the loyal States, and the Opposition in Congress was able to assume a bolder tone and a more menacing attitude than before. Its orators found abundant material, as did its journals, in the asserted misconduct of the war; in the Administration treatment of General McClellan; in the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and in the abolitionism expressed in the Proclamation of Emancipation.

The second proclamation, promised by the first, was duly issued on New Year's Day, 1863. The



man who had signed it rallied all his overtasked energies of mind and body for whatever might be before him in the third year of his unparalleled toil as a ruler, and nearly all men united in declaring that the darkest hours had come.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*Volunteering—Conscription—The Revenue and the National Bank Act—General Hooker—Lincoln and the People—Chancellorsville—Lincoln's Vigil—Lee's Invasion—General Meade—Gettysburg—The Draft Riots—The Elections—Days of Prayer and Thanksgiving.*

THE Winter work of President Lincoln and of Congress, and of army commanders, East and West, was largely preparatory. The same was true of the governors and legislatures of the several loyal States.

On the other hand, it was well understood that the Confederacy was becoming aware of its inability to maintain a prolonged struggle against the superior numbers and wealth of the North, and was calling out its utmost strength to strike decisive blows in the campaigns of 1863. Its armies were sure to be well led, and heroic courage on their part would surely contest every advance of the forces of the National Government.

On the part of the latter, larger armies than before and not smaller were needed for yet another reason. The cities, posts, and areas won required occupation, and long lines of communication were now to be guarded. All troops so employed were to be deducted from the aggregate before declaring the number which could be placed in line upon the ex-

pected battlefields. Volunteers were still coming forward in considerable numbers, and many of them were veterans whose first terms had expired, but not even the large bounties now offering could stimulate volunteering sufficiently to supply the imperative demand for men. Call after call had been made, and had been responded to nobly, but now the need of the hour was for soldiers without limit ; for all the able-bodied men of the North, as they might be required, precisely as the South had declared its whole able-bodied male population subject to military conscription.

What was afterward known as the Draft Act was therefore brought before Congress. By its terms and provisions, the entire militia of the United States was made subject to enrolment and conscription at the discretion of the President, and it met with prolonged and bitter opposition in Congress, and throughout the country, before it became a law.

The finances of the Government had already caused a resort to every known device for increasing the revenue, and this had become enormous, but the market for Government bonds at home had become almost glutted, while the foreign money markets, except those of Germany, as yet accepted American national securities timidly, looking at the vast cost of the war, its apparent uncertainty, and the still threatening attitude of England and France. In various ways these two powers were acting as the silent allies of the Confederacy, important elements of their ruling classes being by no means silent. The financial difficulty was largely overcome by

means of the National Bank Act, prepared as an Administration measure, and urged upon Congress to its passage by all the influence which the President could legitimately exercise. There were not wanting, indeed, those who asserted that the personal will of the "tyrannical dictator" was altogether too manifestly felt in both Houses of Congress.

However much or little of the responsibility for Fredericksburg might belong to General Burnside, the results of that battle disqualified him for a continued command of the Army of the Potomac. He was transferred to the command of the Department of the Ohio, and was succeeded on the Potomac by General Joseph Hooker, a brave and capable officer, who was familiarly known to the soldiers as Fighting Joe. He was soon to offer an admirable illustration of the truth that a good division commander is not necessarily a good field marshal.

All the while a process went on which had been widening and deepening from the beginning. In his messages to Congress ; in his successive proclamations ; in his published letters to leading politicians, both friends and foes ; in his reported conversations with men and women, and in the accounts continually printed and orally discussed of his manner of life and work, Abraham Lincoln was becoming personally known and studied, loved or hated, by every man and woman in the United States, and by all the children old enough to read. The powers of the central Government, called into action as never before, were permitted to be gathered into his hands, with an increasing faith that he could be

utterly trusted to employ all for the common good, unselfishly. Even the men who hated him did not call in question their own sanity by expressing any doubt of his sincerity. In fact, he was too sincere for them altogether, and what they hated was his evident purpose to fight the war out to the last man and the last dollar.

Spring opened at last. The armies in the West and centre pushed forward zealously. The Army of Northern Virginia, under Lee, returned to its old lines menacingly, and in the first week of May it dealt a terrible blow upon a part of the Army of the Potomac. The battle of Chancellorsville cost it over thirteen thousand men, but the Union forces lost over seventeen thousand and the battleground. Considering the relative resources of the combatants, every such battle was a Confederate defeat, and President Lincoln was justified in demanding of General Hooker an instant push against the enemy, re-enforcing his troops with the thirty-seven thousand men whom he had somehow failed to use in that action.

The night after Chancellorsville was afterward declared, by Secretary Stanton and others, to have been the darkest hour of the Civil War. That night the writer of this book was detained in his room, opposite that of the President, by duties which could not be deferred. At a late hour he heard the sound of feet slowly pacing up and down in the President's room, as the heart-stricken ruler pondered the lost battle, and wrestled with the problems it placed before him. There were no other ears to hear. Hour

after hour went by, and at three o'clock in the morning, when the secretary finished his task and stole silently away, the last sound he heard was that measured, heavy footfall. A few hours later, when he returned, the President was eating breakfast in the same room, and the new orders to General Hooker were ready to go out.

The months of May and June, 1863, were crowded with activities. General Grant succeeded in cooping up in Vicksburg the best force which the Confederacy had remaining in the Mississippi Valley. General Hooker accomplished little more than the work of getting his forces into very effective condition, while General Lee prepared for the most stupendous military and political blunder of the war, an invasion of the North with his entire available field force. It was an undertaking in which success was impossible and failure was ruin. The soundest explanation of it is probably an exaggerated estimate of the existing disaffection among the people of the loyal States, the loud grumbling against taxes and the Draft Act being misinterpreted to imply a readiness to accept a Confederate deliverer, and to furnish men and money to the Confederacy instead of to the Union.

The machinery for the enforcement of the conscription was in good hands, and it was announced that the first draft would be made in July all over the North. How many more were to be made afterward could only be guessed at, and everywhere the press and leaders of the Opposition were vehement in their denunciations of the "pitiless blood tax

levied to carry on an abolition war." There were distinctly uttered threats of violent opposition to the enforcement of the draft, but less attention was paid to these by anybody after the great events which preceded the day set for it.

General Lee's preparations for his northward movement were made behind a bold and threatening front, and the hot battle of Brandy Station, in the second week of June, resulted from General Hooker's effort to ascertain his enemy's position. The truth, or enough of it, was soon known to the President, and he at once called upon the States nearest to the point of probable invasion, New York, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, for one hundred and twenty thousand men for temporary service. The nature of the summons was at once known across the lines, and a curious impression spread among Lee's men that they were now to be met only by militia, whom they expected to scatter easily. They were to be quickly undeceived, but the leisurely manner in which General Hooker moved the Army of the Potomac brought to a culmination existing differences between him and the President and General-in-Chief Halleck. He offered his resignation, and it was accepted while the army was on its march.

Through campaign after campaign, Mr. Lincoln had carefully, almost painfully, studied the course and character of the generals commanding under him. He knew them much better than they or the country supposed that he did. In such a juncture as now arose, it was absolutely necessary to name a

new commander from among the corps commanders who had been with the Army of the Potomac from the beginning, who were acquainted with its officers, known to and trusted by its men, and who were familiar with the details of the present movement. There was very little adverse criticism of his selection of General George G. Meade of the Fifth Army Corps, to take the place vacated by General Hooker.

By June 24th the main body of General Lee's army was north of the Potomac, and a few days later part of his force seemed to be within striking distance of Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. If he were now to win a victory, Philadelphia and Baltimore would quickly be in his hands, and the work of fortifying those places and intermediate points was hurriedly begun. There could be to him and his army but one result of even such a success, but the moral effect upon the North was tremendous. The militia came forward rapidly, and the cry of vehement opposition to the draft seemed for a moment to subside.

General Grant was known to be pressing the siege of Vicksburg with an energy which needed no urging, and the President gave his whole mind to the measures needful for strengthening Meade, and for preparation to meet any, even the worst possible termination of the coming collision between the two armies. Had the Army of the Potomac been shattered at Gettysburg, instead of victorious, General Lee would still have found himself confronted by numbers exceeding his own, of men who had not



been in that battle. The story of Gettysburg is too well known to require repetition. The news of the three days' fight, and the final recoil of the Army of Northern Virginia, went out to the country accompanied by the glad tidings of the surrender of the Confederate force and fortress at Vicksburg to the army under Grant, and it was everywhere felt that the Civil War had reached its turning-point. Never could the Confederacy hope to rally from the effect of the twin disasters. Its allies at the North, what was called the Copperhead faction of the miscellaneous Opposition to the Lincoln Administration, received as destructive a blow a few days later.

Saturday, July 11th, had been named for the enforcement of the Draft Act in the city of New York, and it began on that day. It was resumed upon the 13th, Monday, with a confident expectation that it would proceed peacefully. The great city, however, contained enormous imported elements of social disorder, the ignorance, the depravity, the crime of Europe, and these, by the rash talk of local political disturbers, had been infused with the idea that the conscription was a rich man's law for the oppression of the poor. It was as if a heap of combustibles had been prepared. If any organized resistance to the draft had really been intended in /co-operation with General Lee's invasion, that idea had now, of course, died away, but the match was applied, nevertheless, as if accidentally, and the results were terrific. During several days the mob held a fiercely disputed possession of large parts of the city, doing an immense amount of damage, and

the riots were not suppressed until over fourteen hundred rioters were killed. There were no disturbances of any importance elsewhere, but the lesson was universally accepted that nothing but ruin could come from a factious refusal to obey law and sustain the National Government.

Brighter hope seemed to be dawning upon the country as the Army of Northern Virginia sullenly recrossed the Potomac, and as the Union gunboats came and went, undisturbed, up and down the Mississippi, while the Union armies occupied the wide areas on either side which were now cleared of Confederate armies. No sunshine seemed to come into Mr. Lincoln's working-room, however. His critics were as busy as ever. The credit for all successes went to the generals in the field who, as some men said, had won victories almost in spite of his intermeddling. The declarations of the generals themselves, then and afterward, silenced that particular slander ; but there were a thousand faults to find, and even his best friends seemed dissatisfied. It was weary toiling, and only a frame and a will of tempered iron could have so long endured it.

Not many days after the battle of Gettysburg, the first Grand Council of Delegates of the Union League was held in Washington. Even in this patriotic body the bitter animosities caused by Mr. Lincoln's policy in Kansas and Missouri made themselves vehemently heard, nearly all of the first session being consumed in unstinted attacks upon him. A sufficient defence was made by one of his own secretaries, a member of the permanent Grand Council, and a

sweeping majority sustained him. When that vote was taken another resolution was passed providing that the next Grand Council of Delegates should be held in connection with the next National Convention of the Republican Party. That is, it was a distinct declaration that the Union League proposed the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for a second term as President of the United States.

The remainder of the Summer and the Autumn of 1863 contained many military events of importance. By the end of October General Grant was in charge of the new and wide authority given him in the West. All the armies of the Union were strengthened by re-enforcements obtained through the stern operation of the Draft Act, and the Confederacy made its own conscription more severely than before, to prepare for what many of its best generals admitted to be a useless continuation of the struggle. It was a period for rallying, if not of resting, and for something like mournful congratulation that the very worst was over.

A piece of land upon which many men had fallen, part of the battlefield of Gettysburg, was selected for a national cemetery, to receive the remains of the dead heroes of that fight. It was to be solemnly set apart as a soldiers' burial ground upon November 19th, 1863, and the President was invited to be present. Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, was to be the orator of the occasion. The speech he made before the great assembly which came to listen was worthy of his high fame. Mr. Lincoln also was expected to speak, but the pressure of his official

duties prevented him from making any special preparation. After setting out from Washington, and while in the railway car that carried him, he wrote, and he afterward uttered at Gettysburg, a few words which are not likely to be forgotten :

“ Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and dedicated, can long endure. We are met upon a great battlefield of that war. We are come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here ; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining for us, that from these honored dead we may take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion ; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The work was unfinished, but the multitudes who heard or read that speech were profoundly infused with the devotionally patriotic spirit which breathed in every line of it. The American people, of whatever creed or anti-creed, are essentially religious. There had been a unanimous approval when the President's announcement of the Fourth of July

victories called for a recognition of the divine mercy, and when, a few days later, he named August 6th as a day of national thanksgiving and prayer. The annual Thanksgiving Day, in November, became national instead of local, by the proclamation with which he appointed its date, and December 6th was shortly afterward made the occasion of another national prayer-meeting in honor of the successes gained in East Tennessee.

The Autumnal elections presented a very readable report of the reaction of popular opinion in favor of the Lincoln Administration. Every State except New Jersey was carried by the candidates of the Republican Party, and the Congress chosen was prepared to give the President unlimited support, however much grumbling might be done by some of its patriotic members while so doing. When it assembled, it received from him a message which was a very condensed but complete and hopeful report of progress. It contained also a sure prophecy of the end approaching, but set forth plainly the necessity for a steady continuance of the dedication and consecration which he had spoken of in the Gettysburg cemetery.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

*Grant in Command—Conventions and Nominations—  
The Presidential Campaign—The Wilderness—The  
Constitutional Amendment—Second Inauguration  
Address—Last Battles—Fall of Richmond and Sur-  
render of Lee's Army—The Finished Work of  
Abraham Lincoln.*

THE career of General Grant was followed, step by step, from the beginning, by an amount of searching analysis and adverse criticism well adjusted to the nature and prominence of his military achievements. The President was greatly aided in this manner in reaching the conclusion that, whatever might be the general's defects or shortcomings, he was the right man to be placed in unfettered charge of the closing processes of the Civil War.

The grade of lieutenant-general, previously conferred only upon General Scott, was revived, by Act of Congress, February 29th, 1864, with the well-understood purpose of enabling General Grant to become the ranking officer of the army. He was summoned to Washington, and received his commission at the hands of Mr. Lincoln, at the Executive Mansion, on March 9th. General Halleck and the members of the Cabinet were present on the occasion. The remarks made on either side were brief but weighty, and from that hour forward, as the

general afterward testified, the direction of the Army of the Potomac, and of all other armies, so far as might be, was left without reserve in the hands of the lieutenant-general commanding. A vast load was thereby lifted from the weary shoulders of the President, with an additional relief in the appointment of General Sherman as Grant's successor in charge of the consolidated Department of the West. There was much clearing-up work yet to be done in such States as Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, and in many localities elsewhere, but the remaining forces of the Confederacy were now pretty well concentrated for final defeat in the Army of Northern Virginia under Lee, to be met by the Army of the Potomac under Grant, and in the army under Johnston, to be dealt with by General Sherman and General Thomas.

The people of the Confederacy—that is, of all that remained of it—were weary of their long strain and drain, but they were without any means for making themselves heard, since the government which they had set up had become an irresponsible military despotism, relentlessly bent upon holding out to the last.

The people of the Northern States were also weary, but they were not suffering. The actual losses of life by reason of the war had not consumed the natural increase of the arms-bearing population. The tide of European immigration had been checked, however, and everywhere the labor of all workmen was in active demand at high wages, for business of all sorts was stimulated to unnatural activity by the

war and its demands, and by the superabundance of paper money. There was a feverish kind of prosperity, leading to speculation, extravagance, and corruption, but the apparently heavy burden of taxation was really carried without diminishing the necessary personal outlays of anybody.

On March 26th, 1864, General Grant took up his headquarters with the army he was to command in person, and the long and terrible Wilderness campaign, so thickly strung with bloody encounters, began a few days later. There was no needless delay in the opening of active hostilities in the West, and the fourth year of the war for the Union gave an early promise of the tragic character it was to assume.

The political campaign had already begun, or, rather, it can hardly be said to have ceased since 1860. The Republican masses had now no thought of any other candidate than Abraham Lincoln, and those who accused him of personal ambition for a second term were frankly met with something like, "Of course he wants it. He can't let go till the job's finished. It's a bad time to swap horses when you're crossing a stream."

The Republican National Convention was summoned to meet at Baltimore, June 8th, 1864, and the National Grand Council of the Union League of America was summoned to meet in the same city on the 7th. The latter body was largely composed of men who were also delegates to the former, and the first in session served an admirable purpose as a safety-valve for forces which might otherwise have



made trouble. All the disaffection of the Missouri delegates, and a few others, talked itself out in the council, the League declared for Lincoln's nomination, and its action was, the next day, unanimously ratified by the National Convention. Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, was named for Vice-President, to express the wish of Mr. Lincoln for a recognition of the Union-loving citizens of the border States. He would not so have been nominated, but for a unanimous confidence in the tough and tireless health of Mr. Lincoln.

The platform adopted assumed for the Republican Party the responsibility of the entire course of the Lincoln Administration, approved its measures of war and finance, the Emancipation Proclamation, the conscription, the policy pursued with foreign powers and with malcontents at home. It was bold, clear, and unhesitating, and it threw open to the Opposition the entire field of criticism. This was indeed wide, and it was at once occupied with a great deal of energy and ability. The great mass of the men who were opposed to the re-election of Mr. Lincoln were Union men educated to accept the constitutionality and abstract right of slaveholding, opposed to the Republican Party from its birth, and for these and other reasons prepared to condemn the conduct of the war. Their candidate, indicating their convictions, was already as good as nominated. Very much the more virulent, although smaller faction of the Opposition—calling itself the Democratic Party, although missing from its councils a surprisingly large number of old-time Democrats—

was not by any means soundly in favor of the war for the Union, but was not strong enough to set up for itself. When, therefore, the Democratic National Convention met at Chicago, August 27th, 1864, and nominated General George B. McClellan for President, with George H. Pendleton for Vice-President, all that its extreme Copperhead membership could do was to give the convention and its platform a tone which was distasteful to its own nominee and aided in assuring his defeat at the polls. It would have been worth many votes to have simply named the general without any platform whatever.

Mr. Lincoln's letter of acceptance was brief, its most important point having reference to the attitude of the Administration with reference to the French in Mexico.

What promised to be the most effective political outcry of the Opposition, was its assertion that Mr. Lincoln was not willing to consider and grant such terms of peace with the Confederacy as the nation, or, at least, the Democratic part of it, might deem entirely admissible. An effort to create or increase an impression of this kind was made in July, some weeks before the Chicago Convention assembled. It was made to appear that a pair of authorized Peace Commissioners were in Canada, near the line, waiting to present propositions from the Confederate Government. One of the President's secretaries, Major John Hay, was sent to investigate the matter, and he found two zealous gentlemen from the South, but they were merely a political experiment.

They were of value in presenting an opportunity for publishing to the nation, through the instructions carried by Major Hay, the exact attitude of the President. These were in the following form :

*“ To whom it may concern :*

*“ Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the Executive Government of the United States, and will be met on liberal terms on substantial and collateral points ; and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe conduct both ways.”*

The commissioners bore nothing of the kind, and they went away disgusted, while the Opposition organs made the best they could of the matter, but the people, generally, decided that the kind of peace described by Mr. Lincoln was the precise thing they were fighting for and paying for.

Even timid Republican politicians were startled when, on July 18th, the President issued a call for five hundred thousand more volunteers, adding that all deficiencies would be made up by conscription. It was a very stern announcement of the basis upon which he proposed to be re-elected or defeated, and of his own perception of the shortest and surest road to peace. The people took him at his word, and all the while the advices from the army strengthened his hands. There were Union reverses here and there, for the Confederate leaders made their last campaigns with the energy of desperation and with unsurpassed ability.

The Opposition contested every point with a freedom of speech and of the press which robbed them of their sharpest protest against "the Lincoln despotism." They belittled Union victories and magnified Confederate successes, while declaiming with much justice against the waste, the favoritism, and the corruption incident to so vast a civil and military establishment, but for which the President could not justly be held responsible. The November election came at last, and it was found that the States in which it was held contained over four million of voters. Of these, a majority of more than four hundred thousand sustained Mr. Lincoln, giving him two hundred and thirty-three electoral votes against twenty-one secured by McClellan and Pendleton. These latter came from Kentucky and Delaware, old slave States, and from New Jersey. There could be no question of Mr. Lincoln's constitutional title, for he had a majority of a full electoral college of all the States.

The result had been generally expected by the nation, and had never been doubted by Mr. Lincoln. It was a stunning blow to any remaining hope entertained by the Confederacy. Another was given, a few weeks later, by the utter defeat, at Nashville, of its last important army in the West, and by the beginning of General Sherman's "march to the sea."

All the operations of the forces were now under the unquestioned management of General Grant. The military authority was more subordinate than ever to the civil Executive, because the President

had found a general who perfectly embodied his own view of the use to be made of the superior resources of the National Government. General Grant's own words, in a letter to the President, set forth admirably the relations between them. He wrote :

" From my first entrance into the volunteer service of my country to the present day, I have never had cause of complaint. . . . Indeed, since the promotion which placed me in command of all the armies, and in view of the great responsibility and importance of success, I have been astonished at the readiness with which everything asked for has been yielded without even an explanation being asked."

The Congress which assembled on December 5th, 1864, was in full accord with Mr. Lincoln. Its Opposition membership, with few exceptions, professed a desire for a vigorous prosecution of the war, reserving and exercising its utmost right of criticism of every measure proposed or adopted by the Administration.

The Message of the President was laid before Congress on the 6th, and contained a great deal of interesting and encouraging material, but its most important request was for the adoption of an Amendment to the Constitution, forever prohibiting slavery. An effort in that direction made in the previous Congress had failed, in strange evidence of the morbid timidity of the American people upon the subject of the supposed right of one man to buy or sell another.

Never yet had the President given to any meas-

ure before Congress the open, pronounced, ceaseless advocacy which he now gave to that amendment, declaring it the one thing needful. When at last it became a part of the fundamental law of the land, it was but the "ultimate extinction" he had looked forward to from the platform of the Bloomington Convention.

On February 3d, 1865, something like an effort to open negotiations for peace was made, in an informal conference, on a steamer in Hampton Roads, between the President and Mr. Seward, for the United States, and Alexander H. Stephens, Robert M. T. Hunter, and J. A. Campbell, for the Confederacy. These gentlemen presented no written proposition. They desired an armistice, as between two independent powers, during which both were to reduce armaments while discussing terms of permanent peace. At this point the conference broke down, no matter what other points were made or suggested or what arguments sustained them. Recognition of the Confederacy as a treaty-making power would have been yielding all that the nation was contending for, since it would have included all else. Moreover, the Southern commissioners possessed no authority for negotiations which did not assume that recognition, and the effort was necessarily abandoned.

Sherman's army had reached the coast and was now sweeping steadily northward. Charleston, the birthplace of the war, was already garrisoned by Union troops. The Army of the Potomac, after a series of terrific battles, was closing slowly in upon

the Army of Northern Virginia and upon Richmond, the last stronghold of the Confederacy.

A month passed by after the conference in Hampton Roads, and the day arrived for the second inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. He stood, March 4th, 1865, upon a platform at the east front of the Capitol, as in 1864. Around him and behind him was as dignified an assembly of officials and notables—perhaps it included a larger number of distinguished men. Before him was as vast a multitude of his fellow citizens. How greatly all else had changed he proceeded to depict in the address which he delivered, as follows :

“FELLOW COUNTRYMEN : At this second appearance to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

“The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself ; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

“On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending Civil War. All dreaded it ; all sought to avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide the effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war ; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

"One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed equally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, extend, and perpetuate this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

"Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

"Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces ; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offences, which in the Providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He now gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are just and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ; to bind up the nation's wounds ; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow



and orphans ; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

The address created a profound impression upon the entire nation and even in Europe. The great mass of the men who had recently voted against Mr. Lincoln felt their hearts drawing warmly toward him, while the something of kinship between him and millions of others, white and black, grew manifestly stronger. During the previous year he had exhibited many tokens of weariness, and had more than once expressed his opinion that he should not long survive the war. He was literally wearing out in the service of the nation. There had been times and occasions when the irritation of exhaustion had even shown itself in his temper, but the rare expressions of something resembling petulance had a very mournful meaning.

He now gave himself once more to the task in his hands, but all the machinery of government was in excellent working order, and the conduct of the war had become comparatively a light burden. He issued a proclamation providing pardon for deserters ; ordered a draft for three hundred thousand more men, as if their services might yet be needed ; set all things in order at the capital, and then, intensely absorbed in the last struggle between the armies, he went down the Potomac to City Point to wait there for the coming fall of Richmond.

The army under General Sherman had reached Goldsborough, N. C., and its commander came up to confer as to his part in the remaining operations. A memorable council of war took place on March

28th, 1865, consisting of the President and Generals Grant, Sherman, Meade, Sheridan, and Ord. When it was concluded, the generals hurried away to their respective commands, and the last act of the long tragedy began. During the five days following the council there was but little intermission in the fighting, and the depleted Confederate forces were steadily crushed backward. Then came the end. Richmond was evacuated by its garrison so hastily during the night of April 2d that no kind of protection was left behind. In the vivid language of a Southern writer :

“ And thus, amid acres of burning stores, and dwellings, and manufactories, and mills, and arsenals, and bridges, and vessels, even ; amid crowds of pillagers and fugitives, of slaves and soldiers, black and white ; amid the crash of falling houses and exploding shells ; under curtains of smoke that half obscured the blaze of the conflagration ; amid rapine, and riot, and viler crimes, the city of Richmond fell.”

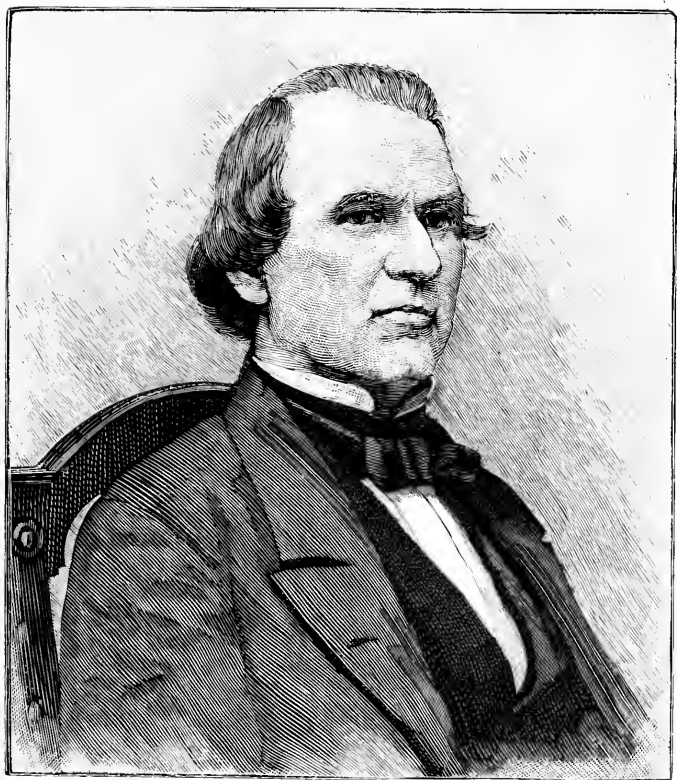
It was occupied on the 3d by a detachment of Union troops, while the main body pushed on in pursuit of the retreating Army of Northern Virginia. Mr. Lincoln paid the city a visit that day, accompanied by little Tad and Senator Sumner, and came again two days later with Mrs. Lincoln and a party of friends. On both occasions his arrival was welcomed with extravagant enthusiasm by the colored people, and on both his manner and his utterances were those of sadness rather than of triumph. The victory had been won, but he thought of its awful cost, so fearfully typified by all that he saw or heard. The remaining forces under General Lee surrendered

upon April 12th, and it was of little consequence that here and there a few fragments of the once powerful Confederate armies yet held together. Processes of sure and speedy adjustment were to go on to a complete restoration of law and order, and Southern men were glad to feel that their future treatment was in the hand which had penned Mr. Lincoln's last inaugural address. The North went mad with joy over the news of Lee's surrender. Cannon boomed ; bells pealed ; crowds gathered in churches with one accord to thank God ; strangers meeting on the street stopped to shake hands ; men and women alike shed tears of glad relief, and the dawn of a new day seemed to have risen gloriously. A cloud came suddenly in upon that dawning. Revenge, and spite, and insanity, were plotting together for evil, and on the night of April 14th the word flashed out, to startle the nation and the world, that Abraham Lincoln had been murdered. An assassin named Wilkes Booth had crept behind him and shot him while he was witnessing a play at Ford's Theatre, in Washington. Attempts to assassinate others were made at the same time, nearly successful in the case of Mr. Seward and his son, but failing entirely with General Grant and Vice-President Johnson. Subsequent legal investigation, after Booth had been followed and killed, disclosed the fact that the conspirators were few and represented nothing but themselves.

Mrs. Lincoln was with her husband when the deed was done, and she never entirely recovered from the shock given her. Major Rathbone—who was

wounded in an attempt to seize the murderer—and Miss Harris, daughter of Senator Harris, of New York, were also with him. There was nothing for surgical skill to do. The President was carried to a private house near by, and here he died on the morning of April 15th, 1865.

The world has never witnessed a more touching exhibition than at once was given of the heartfelt grief of a great nation, and all the world sent earnest tokens of sincere sympathy. There were days of mourning, during which business was all but suspended, and the people seemed to stand, mute and stunned by their calamity, waiting to see the funeral train go by. It passed, from Washington City to Springfield, Ill., in a slow and solemn pageant of honor to the memory of a great and faithful public servant. The wonderful career, so full of noble lessons and of mighty usefulness, which began in a frontier log cabin and ended among the great kings and rulers whose memories cannot perish from the earth, was closed before the bowed heads of an untellable multitude.



ANDREW JOHNSON.



ANDREW JOHNSON.

SEVENTEENTH PRESIDENT.

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By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

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CHAPTER I.

*Birth and Parentage—The Poor Whites of the Old Southern Time—A very Young Tailor's Apprentice—A First Suggestion of Learning—A Start in Life—Emigrating to Tennessee—An Early Marriage—Aristocracy, Politics, and Parties—Alderman and Mayor—Member of the State Legislature—State Senator—Member of Congress.*

IN the Winter of 1808-1809, in very humble homes, widely separated from each other, two boys were born whose names were to become inseparable from the history of their country. Both were born to utter poverty, but with innate strength of character to force their way upward, breaking through all barriers, to the attainment of usefulness, of leadership, and of the highest rank and power which their fellow-citizens could confer upon them.

Andrew Johnson was born of poor white parents

in Raleigh, N. C., December 29th, 1808, about six weeks before Abraham Lincoln was born in a Kentucky log cabin.

The mental and moral and social condition of the poor whites of the slaveholding States was at that time deplorable. Their lot was one of almost hopeless ignorance and degradation. Labor was a badge of servitude, but the black bondsmen of rich landowners were accustomed to speak with contempt of the "poor white trash," whose color prevented them from having aristocratic masters. Pride of race responded to that contempt by making the low-caste white men blind and bigoted supporters of the institution of human slavery. This peculiar result became of tremendous political importance in the course of that generation. It was a trained and hardened narrowing of the mind, which ought not to be lost sight of in any study of the course pursued by this class of men or by its individual members.

If Andrew Johnson's father had any regular trade or occupation, the fact is not preserved. He died of injuries received while bravely rescuing another man from drowning, when his little son was about four years old. During the six years following, Mrs. Johnson struggled on as best she might, and there is no current record of the date at which she married again.

Andrew was a bright, sturdy, hardy little fellow, but the children of North Carolina poor whites were not expected to go to school. He did not, and at ten years of age he was apprenticed to a tailor. He



was at least to have a trade, a hope of earning an honest livelihood, and his mother was relieved of his support. Apart from this, the future seemed dark indeed. Whatever were the duties and drudgeries of a rural tailor's apprentice boy in those days they were his, year after year, accompanied by the daily assurance and consciousness that all the better classes—men and women who owned land or slaves—were entitled to look down upon him as an inferior being.

His fifteenth year was reached and he was still in a semi-barbarous condition. One day he heard a man reading from a book called "The United States Speaker." It was a very miscellaneous selection of ancient and modern eloquence, poetry and prose, designed for elocutionary exercises. It brought to Andrew Johnson his first knowledge and perception of higher planes of thought and life, and a new purpose suddenly quickened within him. He induced the workmen in the tailor shop to teach him the alphabet. When he had mastered his A B C he borrowed the "Speaker" and taught himself to read, as he laboriously digged out its hidden treasures. The orations, the recitals, the dramatic dialogues, the poetry, grave or humorous, opened windows into a world of thought and action hitherto unknown to him, for he had been born outside of it, or beneath it.

As soon as he had served his time, in 1824, the young journeyman tailor went to Laurens Court House, S. C., to work at his trade. In the Spring of 1826 he was in Raleigh again, making preparations for another change of residence. Accompanied

by his mother and stepfather he journeyed across the mountains to Greenville, Tenn., a small cart, drawn by a blind pony, sufficing to contain all the worldly goods they carried with them. They may have been as gypsies or as tramps to any carriage load of ladies and gentlemen whirling past them on the road, but the journeyman tailor in charge of that small outfit, a mere boy in years, had already given evidence of even fiery energy and decision of character. His South Carolina movement had been an enterprise, a search for something better, and this was another. He had determined to make a man of himself, and he had already become a confirmed and vehement rebel against all that he perceived or understood of the political and social barriers and fetters with which he was struggling.

Hardly had Andrew Johnson settled in Greenville before he made an acquaintance that was to be of inestimable help in all his after endeavors for his own emancipation. One of his neighbors was a widow woman named McCardle, who had moved there from Leesburg, Tenn. Her only child, a daughter, Eliza, had been born in Leesburg, October 4th, 1810, and had received a very fair education, in spite of narrow finances, becoming a girl of more than common intelligence and refinement. It was as if Andrew Johnson had crossed the mountains to find Eliza McCardle, for in May, 1826, young as they were, they were married, and he had thenceforth a devoted, patient, and very competent teacher in his own home. There was no danger that his ambition would lose its fire under her schooling. She taught

him to write, but he found the process slow and difficult, and it is said that he did not use a pen with facility until after he became a Member of Congress.

The region described as East Tennessee and fairly well defined by the mountain ranges is distinguished from the western remainder of the State by marked characteristics, social as well as agricultural. It was settled earlier by a race of hardy pioneers who exhibited persistently a spirit of jealous independence of the great slaveholding, landed aristocracy which dominated the cotton fields and tobacco plantations of the Cumberland and Tennessee River valleys.

Here was the stronghold of John Sevier, in his long feud with Andrew Jackson, and here, at a later day, Hugh L. White found his most devoted adherents in his own contest with the hero of New Orleans. There were, indeed, rich landholders, purse-proud and domineering, in East Tennessee, but their power was only great enough to intensify the bitterness with which their poorer fellow-citizens reacted against the "aristocratic coterie of the quality," which undertook to control the politics of the State. These, as yet, were matters of local interests and of personal influences, for there were no parties in Tennessee. The old Federal Party had been known there little more than by name, and the entire population was now Republican, of one faction or another. It was also almost entirely Jacksonian in the year 1828. That was the year in which Andrew Johnson won his first political success. He and his young wife had made one brief experiment of another movement westward, but had soon returned

to Greenville as the place offering them the best promise of prosperity. He had become somewhat of a reading man, but his studies were largely of a political nature, and his rough-and-ready capacity as a stump speaker had already acquired for him a growing leadership among the workingmen and the non-working poor whites of Greenville.

The great Jackson-Adams campaign for the Presidency was fought in 1828, but hardly any of it was fought in Tennessee. There were great public meetings and barbecues, there were processions and bonfires and speeches, but they were all on one side, and when the ballots were counted in November, it was found that the State contained but three thousand men willing to vote for John Quincy Adams. In Greenville a sufficient number had voted for Andrew Johnson to make him an alderman of the municipality, and it was many a year after that before there was any very long interval in the succession of his public employments. He was again elected alderman in 1829 and in 1830, and the local contest was still one of the poor against the rich, without much reference to State politics, and with none at all to those of the nation. In 1830 he was chosen Mayor of Greenville, and held that office during the three years following. In 1831 the County Court appointed him one of the trustees of Rhea Academy, as if in recognition of the fact that he had fairly fought his way to something like social position as well as political influence. At about this time it is related that he took a noticeable part in the debating exercises of a society of the undergraduates of

Greenville College. They were favored young men, receiving educational advantages which had been denied to him, and he may have envied them, but he was in reality educating himself remarkably for the stormy career before him.

In the year 1834, next following the close of his service as Mayor of Greenville, Andrew Johnson emerged notably for the first time beyond the narrow limits of political politics. He had been, of course, a vigorous advocate of Jacksonian Democratic doctrines, but so were most of the larger and smaller politicians around him. Now, however, a field peculiarly his own was opened in the proposal of a new Constitution for the State of Tennessee. By the provisions of this instrument the political power of the great landholders was to be reduced, and he distinguished himself by the vigor of his advocacy. If he thereby increased the bitterness of his political or personal enemies, he at the same time widened the area of his influence and increased the number of his supporters. In the following year, 1835, he was sent to the State Legislature to represent Greene and Washington counties.

Abraham Lincoln received his first election to the Legislature of Illinois nearly a year earlier, in 1834, but the legislative careers of the two men who were yet to have so remarkable an association in history began very nearly together, with the breaking up of the old Jacksonian supremacy, with the "flush times," with the craze for public improvements, and with the organization of the new Whig and Democratic parties out of the factions and fragments held

together by the several political leaders remaining on the field when General Jackson retired to the Hermitage. Lincoln, in Illinois, already becoming fairly well defined as a Whig, supported Hugh L. White for President in 1836, while enthusiastically advocating bank charters, new railroads, improved rivers, and other projects created by the mania for swift progress. Johnson, in Tennessee, without for one moment ceasing to be a Democrat or having a thought of becoming a Whig, opposed the election of Martin Van Buren, advocated that of Hugh L. White, and denounced the public improvement craze in all its phases. He was so unsparing in his war upon the schemes and dreams of the "flush times" that his own constituency took offence. He came before them for a second election in 1837, but the lesson of the great panic had not yet been learned in East Tennessee, and he was defeated for his rashness in predicting it. The men whose fancied prosperity was disappearing like mist hated the other man who said "I told you so," and he was left at home. Another point against him had been his support of John Bell against James K. Polk, but the former drifted into the Whig Party and the latter had, in later days, no warmer political or personal friend than Andrew Johnson. The Southern Democratic dissatisfaction with Martin Van Buren did not prevent his nomination for a second term in 1840, but it sullenly prevented his election. Andrew Johnson's party relations as well as his acknowledged rank were marked in that year by his nomination as a Presidential elector on the Van Buren ticket,

and he greatly increased his reputation in a prolonged and energetic tour of stump speaking ; but the votes of the State could not be obtained by the Democratic Party with a candidate whom it distrusted.

One result of Mr. Johnson's labor for his party in the Presidential campaign was his nomination and election in the next year, 1841, to represent the counties of Greene and Hawkins in the State Senate. In this body he acted with his party, and was one of what were called "the immortal thirteen," who rebelliously prevented the election of a Whig United States Senator by refusing to go into a joint convention of the two legislative houses required for that purpose. This was extreme partisanship, but at the same time he assumed and maintained a position peculiar to himself by introducing and advocating a measure changing the basis of popular representation. This, by the existing law, was modelled upon the plan set forth in the Constitution of the United States, and slaves were represented through their masters.

Johnson was no abolitionist. He avowed himself a staunch supporter of the institution of slavery, but demanded that only the white population should be represented. Of course he failed, but the war between him and the privileged classes went on with undiminished bitterness. His course in the State Senate prepared the way for his nomination and election to Congress in 1843 over John A. Asken, a Democrat who favored a United States Bank, and was therefore supported by the Whigs of his district.

Proud as was Mrs. Eliza Johnson of her husband and of the career which owed so much to her, his political successes had compelled her to make many sacrifices. Narrowness of pecuniary circumstances and the care of her young family had compelled her to remain at home in Greenville during his repeated absences in attendance upon his legislative duties. She was now to send him away farther and for a longer time ; she was almost to give him up to the public service. He left her and went to Washington, to obtain ideas concerning men and things under conditions differing widely from those of Tennessee. His life thus far had been passed within a narrow area, and, although he had expanded wonderfully since he first listened to readings from "The United States Speaker," he had grown within plainly discernible boundary lines. If, however, he was almost fanatically a Jackson Democrat of the old school, he had imbibed all the intensity of the general's unflinching devotion to the Union.

The first speech made by Mr. Johnson, shortly after taking his seat, was in behalf of a bill for the reimbursement to General Jackson of the judicial fine imposed upon him, for contempt of court, at New Orleans in 1815. In the successive sessions of that Congress Mr. Johnson was a consistent supporter of the Texas annexation policy adopted by his party, and he did good service in the Presidential campaign of 1844 which resulted in the election of James K. Polk and opened the way for the war with Mexico, the Wilmot Proviso, and all the great events which were to follow. His support of the



Polk administration was unvarying, with the single important exception of the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain, for Mr. Johnson was one of the few Southern members who to the last refused to surrender the claimed line of  $54^{\circ} 40'$ .

During much of Mr. Polk's term Mr. Johnson's daughter Martha, afterward Mrs. Patterson, was at a boarding school in Georgetown, D. C. She was a bright and attractive young lady, and became a frequent guest at the White House, little dreaming of the marvellous course of events which would one day make her the mistress of its hospitalities.

At the assembling of Congress in December, 1846, the chair long occupied by John Quincy Adams passed, by the usual lot and selection, to Andrew Johnson, its former occupant being prostrated by illness from which he was not expected to recover. On February 16th, 1847, Mr. Adams returned, as if from a closed history, and the House, as one man, arose to do him honor. Mr. Johnson at once addressed the house, and very gracefully and cordially tendered to the venerable statesman his accustomed seat, to which he was at once reverently conducted, and in which, a few days later, the last messenger found him.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Polk Administration—Annexation—Free Homes for Settlers—Lincoln and Johnson in the Same Congress—The Compromises of 1850—Twice Governor of Tennessee—The Kansas-Nebraska Bill—Senator of the United States—The Homestead Bill—Uncompromising Unionism—An Incident in the Senate.*

ANDREW JOHNSON was again sent to Congress by his constituents in 1845. He was an ardent supporter of the Polk administration, but he was not regarded as one of the leaders of his party upon the floor of the House of Representatives. Able men than he bore the burden of the interminable debates, in which the Whig orators denounced the annexation of Texas and its accompanying measures as a gigantic scheme of land piracy. Not many of them were as yet quite ready to denounce it equally as a plan for the extension of slavery, but Mr. Adams, of Massachusetts, and a few others said all that seemed to be needful to make that matter plain.

Mr. Johnson was a hard-working Congressman, regularly attentive to his duties, and ready at any time to make himself heard in defence of the policy and measures of the Administration, or in opposition to any proposed appropriation for internal improve-

ments not of a general nature. He opposed and defeated a contingent tax upon tea and coffee, and it was not long before he attracted notice by his persistent advocacy of homestead bills in their varying forms. He was regularly re-elected until 1853, so that his Congressional service may be treated as a continuous record. His third term began with the Thirtieth Congress, and of this Abraham Lincoln was also a member, as the solitary Whig from the State of Illinois. They were upon opposite sides of almost every question likely to arise, except that while Lincoln opposed the war with Mexico on principle, he also felt bound to vote for supplies of men and money to carry it on. In each successive reappearance of the Wilmot Proviso, in the debates concerning slavery in the District of Columbia, as to internal improvements and in all party divisions of the House, the names of Lincoln and Johnson are recorded upon different lists.

With reference to the compromise measures of 1850, the record of Mr. Johnson was strictly that of his party, with the offered explanation that he was opposed to all compromises as implying some sacrifice of principle, but supported these as expedient and necessary for the preservation of the public peace.

The Whig triumph of 1848 did not disturb Mr. Johnson's firm hold upon the confidence of his constituency, and he was re-elected as usual in the following year. In 1851 the Democratic power was greater than ever, but the party contained leaders who were by no means unwilling to disturb the long domination of the plebeian member from Greenville.

A reapportionment of the State was at hand, to take effect in 1853, reducing the number of its Congressmen from fifteen to thirteen, and Mr. Johnson's district was so dealt with, by taking away Democratic counties and adding Whig counties, that he was left in a hopeless party minority.

It was, in fact, an effort of his old enemies in both camps to dispense with him, and it aroused his born combativeness to the uttermost. He at once announced himself a candidate for governor of the State, and it was necessary for his party to accept him or consent to the election of a Whig. He made a vigorous canvass, everywhere summoning to his support the class of men who regarded him as their champion, and he was elected by a fair majority over the Whig candidate, Gustavus A. Henry, caring very little that his opponents called him a demagogue and stigmatized him as "the mechanic governor."

The first message sent to the Legislature by Governor Johnson emphasized his exceptional position in politics by taking strong ground in favor of a homestead law, and demanding other measures for the improvement of the condition of the working classes. His administration of the affairs of the commonwealth gave very general satisfaction, and his own party was compelled to disregard the strong prejudices against him entertained by many of its leaders. He was again nominated in 1855. The Whig candidate, Meredith P. Gentry, received aid, however, from discontented Democrats, and the canvass which followed was notable for its acrimony and personalities. Andrew Johnson triumphed, and

was more than ever justified in his assertion that he represented the people of Tennessee. His second term as governor was not marked by any extraordinary incident.

One important factor of the State canvass of Tennessee, and which contributed to the vehemence of the contest, was furnished by the changes which were taking place in the aspect of national politics. Both of the old parties had solemnly declared themselves bound to maintain the compromises of 1850. When, therefore, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was introduced by Senator Douglas, virtually destroying that declared barrier to the further agitation of the slavery question, time was required by all the more conservative party leaders, even at the South, for properly adjusting the new action required of them to their previous public pledges and private declarations. Andrew Johnson was not in that manner hampered, as he had voted for the compromises in Congress, with a fairly distinct protest against them, and he now came out as an unhesitating supporter of Senator Douglas. He carried his constituency with him, and at the close of his term as governor, in 1857, he was elected to the Senate of the United States.

This body contained, at that time, a number of men of great ability, representing widely varying views of the Constitution and of the legislation required by the exceedingly critical condition of national affairs. Mr. Johnson assumed and held a position peculiar to himself, in which, as time went on, he became almost isolated. An avowed de-

fender of the institution of slavery, he was separated by that wide chasm from the antislavery senators of every degree. He was by no means a personal adherent of Senator Douglas, and was shortly a severe critic of the course followed by the Illinois statesman. Fanatically devoted to the Union, he was unsparing in his denunciations of every man and of every utterance in any manner threatening its perpetuity, while he continually derided as a mere nightmare every prophecy of forcible secession. He made an open enemy very rapidly of every Southern chief who spoke of disunion and war as possible results of the election of an antislavery President. Apart from the debates arising from the central subject of slavery and its treatment in the Territories, Senator Johnson's most important record was made with reference to his favorite measure, the Homestead Law. Upon this he was in general accord with the Republican senators, and was as steadily opposed by the leaders of his own party. His advocacy of free homes for the poor was tireless, in season and out of season. He was fighting a good fight for the down-trodden class into which he had been born and of which he refused to be ashamed. In one of his many speeches he said :

" You make a settler on the [national] domain a better citizen of the community. He becomes better qualified to discharge the duties of a freeman. He is, in fact, the representative of his own homestead, and is a man in the enlarged and proper sense of the term. He comes to the ballot box and votes without the fear or the restraint of some landlord. After the hurry and bustle of election day are over, he mounts his own horse, returns to his own domicile, goes to his own barn, feeds his own stock. His wife

turns out and milks their own cows, churns their own butter, and when the rural repast is ready, he and his wife and their children sit down at the same table together to enjoy the sweet product of their own hands, with hearts thankful to God for having cast their lot in this country, where the land is made free under the protecting and fostering care of a beneficent government."

It was a picture of a rural condition which had been made impossible in nearly all the slaveholding States, partly by a defective policy of the British Government with reference to her colonies, but incomparably more by the system of slave labor which Mr. Johnson still refused to recognize as the real oppressor under which he had suffered.

The Homestead Bill became a distinct feature of Republican Party policy, was passed in 1860, to be at once vetoed by President Buchanan and to be re-introduced, at the next session of Congress, by Senator Johnson. At the same time he opposed the grants of Government aid to the Pacific Railway enterprises upon Constitutional grounds, and advocated general retrenchment in national expenditures.

During the two years following Mr. Johnson's election to the Senate, the Democratic Party became more and more convulsively torn by angry factions. Its central figure was Stephen A. Douglas, the destroyer of the compromises, assailed vindictively by the very men in concert with whom he had prepared and presented the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, but with whom he had refused to act in dealing with the deplorable consequences of that measure. Mr. Johnson's disagreement with Mr. Douglas became more and more defined, until when at last the

party divided at the Baltimore Convention, in 1860, and the Douglas Democracy determined to stand or fall with its champion, the Union-loving senator from Tennessee declared himself a supporter of Breckinridge and Lane. He did so, however, with repeated and earnest declarations of his conviction that the loudest threats of secession were mere empty breath, and that there was no real danger. It was not until after the November election, when the triumph of the Republican Party was responded to by the immediate adoption of war measures by South Carolina, that he was willing to confess how utterly he had failed to understand the sincerity and the fixed determination of the disunionist leaders.

When Congress assembled in December, 1860, the nation listened with the most intense anxiety for the utterances of Southern representative men upon the subject of secession. The views of some senators were already known, while others were as yet undeclared if not undecided. It was reasonably sure that the Congressional debates of that Winter session would both indicate and influence the future course of several of the States of the South. Mr. Johnson lost no time in declaring his position, with the outspoken vehemence belonging to his character. On December 13th he introduced a joint resolution to amend the Constitution of the United States. He proposed the election of the President and Vice-President by district vote ; that of United States senators by a direct popular vote ; a limitation of the terms of service of Supreme Court judges to twelve years, half of them to be chosen from free



States and half from slave States ; and upon this resolution he made a speech in which he declared his purpose of standing by the Union to the last extremity. His denunciations of secessionists aroused against him an exceedingly bitter feeling in many parts of the South, but gained him a corresponding popularity in the North. As the session advanced Republican senators became prudently silent, to avoid in any manner compromising the attitude to be assumed by the coming administration of Abraham Lincoln. The more important measures before the Senate and the perils of the impending crisis were discussed mainly by the Southern leaders and by Northern Democrats. Mr. Douglas especially distinguished himself, but was severely criticised by Mr. Johnson as being too moderate and conciliatory. The Crittenden Compromise, as it was called, and the work of the Peace Conference offered abundant material and opportunity for presentations of the entire history of the slavery question and of every point of law and right involved. The fixed purposes of the secessionists were more and more plainly manifest day after day.

During one of the exciting debates upon the Peace Conference propositions occurred an exceedingly dramatic incident. The Senate galleries were densely packed. Several Southern senators had spoken, denouncing Republicanism as abolitionism, and expressing views plainly indicating the action they were so soon to take. They were replied to by Senator Douglas, followed by Senator Lane, of Oregon. Mr. Johnson took the floor as the latter sat

down, and poured forth such a torrent of invective against all disunionism and treason as even he had never uttered before. As he ceased, with a burst of angry patriotism, a young man in the gallery behind him shouted, "Three cheers for Andy Johnson!" They were given vociferously by the excited audience, and Senator Mason, of Virginia, at once demanded that the galleries should be cleared. Vice-President Breckinridge, in the chair, promptly gave the order, but, as he did so, a lady leaned forward from the ladies' gallery, waved her handkerchief, and her clear, ringing voice demanded "Three cheers for the Union!" The dense throng arose as one man and gave them with almost spasmodic enthusiasm. The Vice-President shouted to the sergeant-at-arms to make arrests, and was responded to with fierce derision as the crowd surged out through the several doorways. No arrests were made. Never before or afterward was there precisely such a shattering of the dignity of the Senate of the United States.

The precise tone of Andrew Johnson's Unionism at this time may be understood from the following extract from a speech made by him in the Senate on March 2d, 1861 :

"I would have them [the secession leaders] arrested and tried for treason, and, if convicted, by the eternal God they should suffer the penalty of the law at the hands of the executioner."

At the close of the session of Congress he returned home by way of Virginia. At Liberty, in that State, he was threatened with violence by a mob,

but drove his assailants away, pistol in hand. At Lynchburg he was hooted. In many places throughout the South he was burned in effigy, but there were large numbers of Southern Unionists, nevertheless, who silently agreed with him and honored him.

### CHAPTER III.

*Mrs. Johnson a Political Prisoner—The Solitary United States Senator from the Confederacy—Military Governor of Tennessee—The Proclamation of Emancipation—Andrew Johnson Still a State-rights Democrat—Chosen Vice-President of the United States—Conflicting Views of the Reconstruction Question.*

MRS. JOHNSON had joined her husband in Washington shortly before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, and she remained there during his brief absence in Tennessee. He went to attend to his private business and to make an effort to arouse and organize the strong Union element in his own district. Shortly after his return to the national capital, his wife's delicate health caused her to cut short her intended visit and go home to Greenville. She had spent but two months in Washington.

The Confederacy was now extending its political and military operations with extraordinary rapidity, while the Federal Government was altogether unprepared for anything but a policy of waiting and of preparation.

However strong might be the Union element in East Tennessee, it was not long before Mrs. Johnson discovered that she was in an enemy's country. She was the wife of a man who had made himself

especially obnoxious to the Confederate leaders, and she was served with a written order, dated April 24th, 1861, but not reaching her until somewhat later, requiring her to at once pass beyond the assumed boundaries or at least the military lines of the Confederacy within thirty-six hours, going by way of Nashville. She was altogether too ill to undertake such a journey, and remained at Greenville all summer under exceedingly unpleasant circumstances. By September she was sufficiently recovered to apply for permission to go northward, and set out at once, without waiting for it, accompanied by her children and under the care of her son-in-law, Daniel Stover, who died a few months later. She was stopped at Murfreesboro' by the Confederate General Forrest, and was detained as a political prisoner until Isham G. Harris and Andrew Ewing obtained orders from the Richmond authorities to send the Johnson family to Nashville. They reached that place in safety, and it became their home until the end of the Civil War.

One after another, with greater or less perfection of legal form and ceremony, eleven States declared themselves out of the Union and members of the Confederacy. Andrew Johnson declared that not one of them had gone out or could go out, but he alone of their twenty-two United States senators firmly adhered to that conviction, and remained at his post of duty in Washington. His position was one of great and peculiar difficulty, although he had earned and received a high degree of esteem and confidence from Mr. Lincoln and from all the sup-

porters of the Administration. He was regarded as pre-eminently the representative of the silenced Union men of the South, and his advice was listened to with a deference to which, for several reasons, it was hardly entitled. It was evident, however, that his best public services were not to be rendered in the Senate under existing circumstances, and on March 4th, 1862, the President appointed him "military governor" of the State of Tennessee, with vaguely autocratic power over all matters not under the direction of the Federal military commanders. Criticisms of the constitutionality and legality of such an appointment were abundantly made, but all were answered by describing it as a necessary war measure.

Mr. Johnson reached Nashville on March 12th, and proceeded to organize a provisional State government. On the 18th he issued a proclamation to the people of Tennessee. He appealed to them to return to their allegiance; to uphold the laws of the State and of the United States; and to accept a full amnesty for all past acts and declarations. This, of course, was to be obtained by means of what was called "the iron-clad" oath of allegiance, and one of Governor Johnson's early official acts was the removal of the city councilmen of Nashville for refusing to take that oath.

There had been a convention of the Union men of East Tennessee held at Cincinnati, O., May 30th, 1861, and Andrew Johnson had attended it. There had been those who contemptuously described it as a "mass meeting of refugees," but it had been en-

titled to more than a little respect, and his utterances before it had much to do with the enthusiastic public reception given to him in the same city on June 19th following. During a long period there had been imminent peril to life and limb of any Tennessee Unionists daring to assemble upon the soil of that State in mass meeting or convention, and the military governor now zealously decided that the time for freedom in that respect had come. He urged and aided with all his influence and power the holding of Union meetings, attending them himself whenever he could, and the successes and advances of the Federal armies gave security. At the same time he vigorously promoted the armed organization of Tennessee Union men, adding to the national forces not less than twenty-five regiments of volunteers, besides the numbers who enlisted in other bodies of troops. He pushed to completion, as a public measure, the railway from Nashville to the Tennessee River. On December 8th, 1862, he issued a proclamation ordering elections of members of Congress in the several State districts, for no considerable Confederate force was at that date in position to prevent such an exercise of the rights of citizenship. On the 13th of the same month he issued another proclamation which was fiercely resented by the social class of which he had so long been the avowed enemy. He declared a special assessment upon the property of well-to-do secessionists

“in behalf of the many helpless widows, wives, and children in the city of Nashville, who have been reduced to poverty and wretchedness in consequence of their husbands, sons, and fathers

having been forced into the armies of this unholy and nefarious rebellion."

On September 22d, 1862, President Lincoln issued his first proclamation of emancipation, announcing that he would issue the second upon January 1st, 1863, and that he would then designate the States and parts of States exempted from the effects of the edict by reason of their return to their allegiance. He said: "And the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."

It was with reference to this provision that Governor Johnson's proclamation of December 8th, 1862, was issued. It was true that the elections had not been held and that Tennessee was not represented in Congress, but he had already prevailed upon the President, by urgent solicitation and assurances, that the entire State should be omitted from the final decree. West Virginia and parts of Virginia and Louisiana were also omitted, but without securing any permanent commercial value for whatever slave property remained in any of the regions indicated. It was made plain, however, that no change had taken place in Andrew Johnson's views upon the questions of slavery or of State rights.



On February 20th, 1863, he issued a proclamation directing the agents of all "traitors" to withhold collections made by them and to pay the same to the authorities of the United States.

Except for the presence of Federal armies, entirely independent of the provisional civil authority, the power assumed and exercised by the governor was nearly absolute and autocratic. His administration was declared to be in the main just and wise, except by the enemies upon whom his hand fell so heavily. He did much for the restoration of order and the enforcement of the laws, and no man ever questioned his personal integrity.

As military governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson fully maintained the position he had previously acquired as the foremost representative, almost the embodiment of the Union-loving element of the Southern populations. It was this fact and the personal esteem in which he was held by President Lincoln which led to his elevation to higher rank and to the exercise of vastly greater power.

The National Convention of the Republican Party was held at Baltimore on June 6th, 1864. It was not by any means the same party which had nominated and elected Abraham Lincoln in 1860. It had received important accessions from the then supporters of Breckinridge and Lane, of Bell and Everett, and to a much great number from what was then the Douglas Democracy. The new Democratic Party, about to present the names of McClellan and Pendleton, was in like manner a composite of the three anti-Republican forces indicated, and

the best political judges were as yet uncertain concerning the strength it might exhibit at the November polls. To the minds of many men there were reasons why the War-Democratic element of the Republican Party should be recognized in the selection of its candidate for Vice-President. There was also a strong feeling among original members of the party in favor of making no change, but of again naming Hannibal Hamlin. When, however, the delegates assembled at Baltimore, it was made generally understood that President Lincoln's policy for the restoration of the South to its relations with the Union would in his opinion be greatly promoted by the selection of a Southern man, representing the loyalties of the border States, past, present, and to come, and that he had made choice of Andrew Johnson.

The reaction against this proposition was very strong at the outset, but the President's immediate friends worked diligently, and a more or less reluctant assent was given by a steadily increasing number. The convention was composed of men who were even oppressively aware of the political peril there might be in any appearance of internal factions or jarring counsels. The nomination of Mr. Lincoln having been duly attended to, a ballot for the Vice-Presidential nomination was taken. When the ballots were counted, it was found that Andrew Johnson had received two hundred ; Daniel S. Dickinson, one hundred and thirteen ; Hannibal Hamlin, one hundred and forty-five ; General Benjamin F. Butler, twenty-six ; General Lovell H. Rousseau, twenty-one, with a few scattering. The

one danger to be avoided, it was felt, was any kind of contest, and several delegations at once changed their votes to the candidate having the highest number for that reason only. The vote was held and the process continued, until it was finally announced that Andrew Johnson had received four hundred and ninety-four ; Daniel S. Dickinson, seventeen, and Hannibal Hamlin, nine. The nomination of Mr. Johnson was at once made unanimous.

The Republican nominees received two hundred and twelve electoral votes, against twenty-one given for those of the composite opposition ; but it could not be said that the victorious ticket had obtained additional strength from the name of Andrew Johnson. A very large number of the men who voted for him openly declared their distrust of him as a pro-slavery man. The post of Vice-President was of no special importance, to be sure, but then it should, they said, be filled by a man who was sound upon the vital question.

March 4th, 1865, arrived, and Mr. Lincoln the second time took the oath of office, delivering the solemn and eloquent address which was in reality his farewell.

On the same day, in the Senate chamber, the oath of office was administered to Andrew Johnson as Vice-President. Both the manner and the matter of the speech which he made gave deep and lasting offence to the nation, and prepared the way for future trouble. It was an exceedingly important speech, however, for it contained a plain statement of the political doctrine which his very nature for-

bade him to abandon. Referring to the current action of the State of Tennessee, under his own supervision, to that date, he said :

“ I desire to proclaim that Tennessee, whose representative I have been, is free. . . . She stands to-day redeemed. She waited not for the exercise of power by Congress ; it was her own act ; and she is now as loyal, Mr. Attorney-General, as the State from which you came. It is the doctrine of the Federal Constitution that no State can go out of this Union, and, moreover, Congress cannot eject a State from this Union. Thank God, Tennessee has never been out of the Union ! It is true, the operations of her government were for a time interrupted, there was an *interregnum*, but she is still in the Union, and I am her representative. This day she elects her governor and her Legislature, which will be convened on the first Monday of April, and her senators and representatives will soon mingle with those of her sister States ; and who shall gainsay it ? for the Constitution provides that every State shall be guaranteed a republican form of government.”

The principles by which President Lincoln proposed to direct his policy, and which were to be accepted and adopted by the Republican Party and by Congress, were indicated by him in various ways ; but a few days later he made an all-sufficient commentary upon the crude and illogical talk of the Vice-President. Among other trenchant utterances, he said :

“ The question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it is . . . a merely pernicious abstraction. We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relations with the Union, and that the sole object of the Government is to get them back into proper practical relations. I believe it is easier to do this without deciding or even considering whether those States have ever been out of the Union. The States, finding themselves once more at home, it would seem to me immaterial to inquire whether they had ever been abroad.”

It was evident that something like a political chaos existed at the South, to be dealt with as a great fact resulting from a long civil war, and without much reference to ancient party creeds. The words of Mr. Lincoln, however, served to deepen in the minds of many Republican leaders and a multitude of the people the impression that the Vice-President had neither changed his views nor advanced one step since the day when he voted for the electoral ticket of Breckinridge and Lane. It proved to be a thoroughly correct impression. He had not forgotten anything or learned anything, and in trying to shut up new wine in old bottles he narrowly escaped utter ruin.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Fall of the Confederacy—Death of President Lincoln—Andrew Johnson President of the United States—An Unfortunate Beginning—Johnson and Grant and the Cabinet—The President's Policy of Reconstruction—Lincoln and Negro Suffrage—The Return to a Peace Establishment.*

THE last days of the Confederacy had come. The Union forces closed in upon Richmond, and then the Army of Northern Virginia, under Lee, surrendered to the Army of the Potomac, under Grant. The liberal terms of surrender accorded by the Union commander were made the subject of a vigorous protest by the Vice-President, and in this and in other ways the latter gave cause for a common opinion that he entertained extreme and vindictive ideas as to the manner in which the leaders, at least, of the secession movement should now be dealt with. At the North as well as at the South there were numerous expressions of gratification that the settlement of affairs was to be in the hands of the forgiving and merciful Lincoln, and not in those of the severe and implacable Johnson.

It was not so to be, and the utterly unexpected change was wrought by the hand of an assassin. On April 15th, 1865, at twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock in the morning, Abraham Lincoln

breathed his last. Three hours later, at about half past ten o'clock, there was a sombre, astonished, grief-stricken gathering of American statesmen at the Kirkwood House, in Washington, where the Vice-President had his quarters at that time. He had returned only five days before from a trip to Tennessee, and had intended another departure this very day, had he not been prevented.

The Chief-Justice of the United States was present to administer the oath of office to the new President, so suddenly summoned to power. All the Cabinet officers were there, except the Secretary of State, prostrated by what were then supposed to be the fatal stabs of an assassin's dagger. All senators of the United States remaining in the city had been hurriedly summoned as witnesses. It was an hour of profound sorrow and of dark foreboding, and the nation quickly expressed its resentment that the utterances of Mr. Johnson so little accorded with the feeling common to all his fellow-citizens, and that he failed to offer either sympathy in the present or hopeful assurance for the future. He made no mention of the murdered President, paid no tribute to his memory or his services, but spoke much of himself and of his own record. He said :

“As an indication of any policy which may be pursued by me in the administration of the government, I have to say that that must be left for development as the Administration progresses. The message or declaration must be made by the acts as they transpire. The only assurance I can now give of the future is reference to the past.”

He was taken very literally at his word, and his

record was examined. Very prominent in it was found to be his long and unflinching war upon the aristocratic, governing class of the South, now to be so largely at his mercy. He had given vivid illustrations of his temper toward the rich and influential men of the Confederacy while he was military governor of Tennessee, and his opinion relating to the treatment of its armies was supposed to be indicated by his protest against the terms of Lee's surrender. He emphasized the correctness of the latter idea a few days later by his treatment of General Sherman's generosity to General Joseph E. Johnston and the last great army of the South.

On April 18th a delegation of citizens of Illinois, headed by Governor Oglesby, called upon President Johnson, and in reply to their address he paid a really eloquent tribute to Mr. Lincoln. Other delegations followed, day after day, and there was now no fault to be found with the tone or substance of his responses ; but it was too late to remedy entirely the hurt he had given. Prominent Republican politicians and journalists declared that he was a pro-slavery, State-rights Democrat, to be watched with the most critical jealousy, and this was the key-note of the relations which were to exist between him and the legislative branch of the National Government. Co-operation which began with distrust was sure to result in collision.

There was yet another difficulty in the path of President Johnson : he failed to perceive that he had not fallen heir to the peculiar power held and exercised by President Lincoln. Vast as was the



nation's confidence in and love for its great and patient ruler, that alone had not sufficed to make him practically a dictator. He had been invested, by the war itself and by the peril of the Republic, with any authority implied in the protection of the national life ; the masses of the people bade him to express their will and realize their hope, while Congress was in vigorous accord with him—that is, one at heart with him, criticisms notwithstanding.

The war power had now passed away from the Executive, and the work remaining to be done was largely that of the legislature and the judiciary, rather than of the commander-in-chief. Nearly two years later, March 12th, 1867, an act of Congress declared that August 20th, 1866, should be regarded as the legal termination of the Civil War. Almost immediately upon assuming office, President Johnson began to take action which implied that the authority for such a declaration as was at last embodied in that law rested with him, to be exercised as he might see fit.

Unless by Executive summons there could be no session of Congress before December, 1865, when the Thirty-ninth Congress would assemble according to law. Not many men had yet grasped the meaning of Mr. Johnson's public declaration on March 4th, that every district in every State of the shattered Confederacy would be entitled to representation in that body, and that every State of the eleven which had declared their own secession would be entitled to send two men to its Upper House. Very fixed and clear was the common conviction

that, under the Constitution, Congress was the sole judge of its own membership.

General Sherman's report of General Johnston's surrender reached General Grant in Washington on the evening of April 21st, 1865, the day on which the funeral procession of Abraham Lincoln began its solemn progress northward. At the Cabinet meeting immediately summoned, President Johnson and the Secretary of War stood together in denunciation of Sherman's leniency. General Grant, then and afterward, was compelled to use all his power and some thoughtful diplomacy in order to shield his not at all too merciful lieutenant. No change had been made as yet in the membership of the Cabinet, but the Secretary of State was yet confined to his room, with grave doubt of his recovery, and it was supposed that he, more than any other man, represented the humane and liberal policy intended by the late President.

On April 29th, while the funeral procession was on its way, President Johnson issued a proclamation removing trade restrictions in most of the seceded States, but it required subsequent modifications to bring it into accord with existing laws, which the Executive, acting alone, had no authority to set aside.

Under the policy instituted by Mr. Lincoln, there had been maintained a shadow of a loyal Virginia State government, with its perfunctory capital at Alexandria, and President Johnson seemed to be almost following in the steps of his predecessor when, on May 9th, 1865, he issued a proclamation professing to restore the State of Virginia to its re-

lations with the Union. The Republican leaders took quick alarm, nevertheless, and sharp critics asserted that the President was in this manner exercising a power which he had himself denied the existence of, even in Congress.

On May 20th, 1865, Secretary Seward returned to duty as Secretary of State, and there is now abundant evidence that he speedily began to exert a modifying and restraining influence. He could not at once make himself felt, however, and the stubborn self-will of Andrew Johnson afterward rendered impossible the best results of wise counsel.

A proclamation was issued, with general approval, on May 22d, opening to commerce all the Southern ports with the exception of four in Texas.

On May 29th an exceedingly important proclamation went out, to be deeply studied and severely criticised by men of all parties. It offered general amnesty to all participants in the rebellion, with the exceptions included in fourteen specified classes. Noteworthy, as illustrating the personal views and feelings of the President, was the class which included "all participants in the rebellion the estimated value of whose taxable property is over twenty thousand dollars."

The poor whites of the South were all pardoned, but not any of its rich men. What was to be done with some of the men included in the other exceptions had already been indicated by the preparation of a list of offenders, who were to be indicted and tried and punished for the crime of treason. It began with the name of Robert E. Lee, and this was

followed by the names of many other distinguished soldiers. Action with reference to it was then and afterward prevented by the vigorous written and verbal protests of General Grant, that any such indictment would be in violation of the terms of surrender and parole. The President had vehemently condemned those terms, but consented to acknowledge the legal fact that he and the United States courts were bound by them rather than to have General Grant tender, as he threatened, his instant resignation.

A proclamation issued on May 29th, 1865, appointed a provisional governor for the State of North Carolina, and opened the way for a convention to revise the Constitution of the State and for other purposes. On June 13th a proclamation was issued relating to the reconstruction of Missouri, and action of the same nature, assuming authority to the uttermost, followed in the cases of Georgia, Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, and Florida. They were all States, had never ceased to be States of the Union, and so the President appointed governors for them, and directed them to organize governments republican in form and to send senators and representatives to Congress. The press of the North, and numbers of leading men through the press and before popular assemblies, responded angrily that the President was performing legislative acts for which he had no warrant ; and it soon became plain that the Thirty-ninth Congress, when its hour came, would be found in very solid opposition to what he only too frequently described as " my policy."

The prospect grew darker rapidly as the State organizations provided for by the proclamations went into operation. Disorders of the worst kind prevailed almost everywhere at the South. The machinery of local civil government was generally broken in pieces. Disbanded military forces let loose a host of unemployed men in seemingly hopeless poverty. There were no longer any slaves to do the work required for the support of the white populations. Sore with defeated ambition and wounded pride, and fully believing the abolition of slavery to have been a gigantic robbery, the people of the South and the legislatures they elected acted without any wisdom whatever. They more than justified the Republican predictions of the consequences of the President's policy, and prepared the way for its immediate overthrow. It was by no means an exaggeration that declared the condition of the freedmen under the provisional State governments, and probably under such as were to succeed these, to be intolerably worse than chattel slavery itself. As yet few prominent men at the North and fewer still at the South had much to say about negro suffrage, but the idea was growing fast, and the provisional legislatures and their reckless constituencies were fostering it. President Lincoln had fully accepted it as a political necessity. In September, 1864, in conversation with the author of this book, whom he had appointed to an important civil office in one of the Southern States, the President urged him to do all in his power to secure for colored men the right to vote, saying, "It will be about the

only protection they will have after the war is over." He believed that it might be obtained as a part of the processes of reconstruction, and such was eventually the case ; but not through action originating in the States or taken by them, without direct and overpowering pressure exercised by the Federal Government. President Johnson's conviction that the question of citizenship and suffrage belonged under the Constitution to the States alone, without Federal interference, soon became one of the main issues of his long conflict with the majority in Congress. He at no time believed that the right of suffrage justly belonged or should in wisdom be given to the colored men. Every act and utterance of his with relation to it requires, therefore, for its fair judgment, the keeping in mind as well as may be his inbred estimate of the primary importance of race and color to manhood and civic rights. As the Summer and Autumn of 1865 passed slowly and excitedly away, it grew more and more plainly evident that the Administration of President Johnson was not to become in any degree a continuation of that of Abraham Lincoln.

The dread of undue severity on his part faded rapidly, and was succeeded by an increasing fear lest he should go too far in an opposite direction with reference to results which the Republican Party generally regarded as legitimate fruits of the war for the Union. He seemed to maintain, as yet, a fair degree of accord with the several members of the Cabinet and with General Grant. Each of these, however, in his place, was all but overwhelmed by the volume of duties

poured upon him. The reduction of the army and the navy to a peace establishment was of itself an herculean undertaking. Every department and function of the vast system of revenue and expenditure was still working with feverish activity. Not only the South but the entire nation was under an oppressive sense that it was being adjusted, it knew not how, to an entirely different order of things from that to which it had so long been accustomed. There had been but four years of actual war, but these had been preceded by an era of intense political excitement which seemed to belong to them, and the whole was as an age of duration to the minds of the men and women who had lived through it. In hundreds of thousands of families there were vacancies never to be filled, dating from battlefields and army hospitals, and every description of labor and enterprise was now made rapidly aware of the fact that over a million and a half of able-bodied citizens had ceased to draw pay as soldiers, and had returned to compete for wages and for profits. At the same time a host of workmen previously employed, directly or indirectly, in the various stages of production, manufacture, and transfer of materials and supplies for the forces on land and sea, suddenly found themselves compelled to seek other ways in life. There was general confusion and bewilderment, and the public mind became exceedingly sensitive concerning the words and actions of the men in whose hands the control of events appeared to be. It was not as yet really in anybody's hands, and it was not at all to the advantage of Andrew

Johnson that during so long a time criticism was of necessity mainly concentrated upon him, no Congress being in session to divide it with. The very fact that he was gaining popularity at the South was detrimental to him at the North, and he was altogether lacking in prudence of expression when occasion came for utterances relating to public affairs.

The President's family were settled in the Executive Mansion at an early day, but the condition of Mrs. Johnson's health, as well as her very quiet tastes and retiring disposition, rendered her averse to appearing in society. The social duties and the hospitalities of the White House were therefore placed in charge of her daughter, Mrs. Patterson, who was assisted, during the greater part of President Johnson's term, by her younger sister, Mrs. Stover.



## CHAPTER V.

*The Thirty-ninth Congress—The Freedmen's Bureau Bill—The Thirteenth Amendment—The Civil Rights Bill—Veto after Veto—The President and the General—Rival National Conventions—Noah's Ark—Swinging Round the Circle—Adverse Result of the November Elections.*

THE Thirty-ninth Congress assembled on the first Monday of December, 1865, in a state of mind inclining its members to examine with uncommon care whatever communication it should receive from the President of the United States. The message which Mr. Johnson at once sent in was listened to with something like a sense of relief. It was favorably construed as moderate and conservative, and there were those who asserted that they discovered in it the hand of Mr. Seward as much as that of the President. There was not yet a decided majority of either House quite ready to take issue with the clauses of the message which deprecated even temporary military rule in the South, and which opposed Congressional action upon the subject of negro suffrage. There were, however, several measures already pending, or in a very nearly complete preparation for proposal, which were to serve the purpose of test questions, behind which the opposi-

tion to the President's policy could be organized and solidified.

The present and future condition of the freedmen had been a subject of anxious consideration during all the latter part of President Lincoln's first term. What was known as the Freedmen's Bureau Bill had been passed and signed on March 3d, 1865, but intervening time and experiences had led to the discovery of its defects, and a supplementary bill, greatly increasing and extending the provisions of the first, was quickly placed in the hands of the proper committee. It was understood that it would almost surely meet with Mr. Johnson's opposition, although it was distinctly a part of Mr. Lincoln's policy and that of the Republican Party.

The Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution became law, with the President's concurrence, on December 18th, 1865, but there were clear indications that he would go no further.

The debates upon the Freedmen's Bureau Bill developed the fact that it failed to meet the views of a pretty strong minority, but in February, 1866, it was passed and sent to the President. He returned it with a veto message which, while it dealt vigorously with the money outlays involved and with other causes for criticism, stated with stinging fairness the main issue between him and the Thirty-ninth Congress—the bill, dealing so extensively with Southern affairs and interests, material, social, and political, had been passed by a legislative body in which the South was not represented. The opposite view held and shortly formulated by Congress was

that the South had not yet so far accepted the results of the war as to be entitled to representation, and that certain conditions—one of them negro suffrage—were first to be exacted for the due protection of all the interests involved.

The supporters of the Freedmen's Bureau Bill were unable to at once pass it over the veto, and it was put aside for a time ; but the views of the Republican majority in Congress were embodied in what was known as the Civil Rights Bill. It conferred citizenship upon colored men, and was manifestly a step toward giving them the right of suffrage. It was passed and sent to the President with a general expectation of the veto message with which he returned it, on March 27th, 1866. The tide of reaction against his policy was rising fast, and the declaration in his message that the bill was an interference with the rights of States was all that was required to secure for it a two-thirds vote and to pass it over the veto. Republican leaders in Congress declared that, to all the intents and purposes of reconstructive legislation, the Civil War was not yet ended, and that the Confederacy was but as a captured camp which the Federal Government, the legislative branch quite as much as the executive, had full right to set in order. There was great perplexity in the fact that the Constitution contained no provision for such a condition of affairs, and President Johnson was right in believing that a very large part of the voters of the North were in fair accord with him.

While yet the Civil Rights Bill was undergoing

its second consideration in Congress, the President aimed a blow at the doctrine held by its advocates which only served to strengthen them. He issued, April 3d, 1866, a proclamation declaring the war at an end and peace restored. He was responded to in Senate and House, in many forms of expression, by the demand, "Will the President tell us in what part of the South the war has ceased and in what place peace is really restored?"

A state of war now existed, at all events, between the President and Congress, and a complete list of its many battles does not belong here.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, passed on June 16th, 1866, was returned with a veto message, and was again passed over the veto, finally becoming law on July 28th, 1868.

A revised Freedmen's Bureau Bill passed in July was vetoed and passed over the veto.

The Congressional plan of reconstruction for the Southern States, in opposition to the policy of the President, was brought forward in June, but it was too late in the session for final action upon a matter so complicated. A joint resolution of both Houses of Congress, however, declared that no delegation from any seceded State should be received by either House without the concurrence of the other—that is, well-known legislative jealousies were to be put aside, that the Senate and the House of Representatives might act unitedly as allies in the war between Congress and the President.

The Congressional plan offered suffrage to colored men, but withheld it from white men who had acted

prominent parts in the secession movement. It contained other features which enabled all the Opposition elements at the North to declare it an extreme party measure, and to accept the President's quarrel as their own.

It was manifestly a part of the policy demanded by the received Republican doctrine, as well as by the serious and painful disorders in many parts of the South, that the withdrawal of the remaining Union forces should be delayed rather than hastened. They were required for the protection of peaceful and law-abiding citizens, white or colored, from the lawless and the violent, and their presence was a powerful rejoinder to the proclamation and to the veto messages of the President. The army had been and still was a part of the Congressional plan. It was soon to become so in even a more definite form, but as yet there was some uncertainty as to the political leanings of its ranking officers. General Grant was known to have been a Democrat before the war. The bill reviving for his benefit the grade of general passed the House on May 5th, 1866, but it waited in the Senate afterward until several cautious men, who were watching his administration of the forces under his direction, had satisfied themselves that he could safely be entrusted with additional power. The bill passed at last, and his nomination as General of the Army was confirmed only two days before, on July 27th, Congress adjourned. He had as yet been exceedingly guarded, as became a soldier, in his utterances with reference to the course of political strife. Not long

after the adjournment of Congress, President Johnson asked him : " If I should have trouble with Congress, which side would you support ?" It was an unwise question, betraying how deeply the mind of the speaker was agitated ; but the response was altogether prudent : " That would depend upon which side the law was."

They were both described by others as uncommonly stubborn men, but as yet they had maintained friendly personal relations. Almost a break occurred a few weeks later. The condition of Mexican affairs and the relations to them held by the United States inclined Mr. Johnson to the opinion that the General of the Army was the right man to send to that republic. He remarked to him, in the course of a conversation at the White House :

" I may have occasion to ask you to go to Mexico."

" I am so situated," gruffly replied the general, " that it will not be convenient for me to go."

The President was not disposed to accept that answer as final, and ordered preparations to be made precisely as if a consent had been given. In a few days he summoned the general again to the Executive Mansion. He came and sat in silence while the Secretary of State read to him a very long letter of diplomatic information and instruction. As soon as Mr. Seward ceased reading, he turned to the President and said :

" You know, I told you that it would not be convenient for me to go to Mexico."

The President arose from his chair, and his clinched

fist came heavily down upon the table as he demanded :

“ I would like to know if there is an officer of the army who will not obey my orders ! ”

He had made a tremendous mistake. The general arose, hat in hand.

“ I am an officer of the army,” he said, “ but I am a citizen also. The service you ask me to perform is a civil service, and, as a citizen, I may accept or decline it ; and I decline it.”

The boundary lines between great co-ordinate powers and duties are not always easy to find. The very discovery of them sometimes implies a disaster to the finder. General Grant put on his hat and left the room, and his relations with the President were never afterward quite so cordial as before.

By vetoes and by votes, by messages and speeches, directly and indirectly had both President and Congress appealed their case to the people of the United States, with a certainty that a verdict of some sort would be rendered at the November elections. Upon that verdict would largely depend the action to be taken at the coming Winter session, as well as the tone and legislative purposes with which the Fortieth Congress would assemble in the following Spring.

The general attitude of the Republican Party press is fairly indicated by one editorial sentence in the New York daily *Tribune* of August 13th : “ A political struggle rarely surpassed in importance and intensity has been precipitated upon the country by the treachery of Andrew Johnson.”

If, however, his enemies assailed him with unsparing vituperation and malediction, his supporters were by no means idle. With a view to the consolidation of the several elements of the Opposition to what was called "the iron rule of Republicanism," a national convention had been summoned to meet in Philadelphia on August 14th. The enormous temporary structure prepared for its reception was called the Wigwam, and delegations from every State and Territory were invited. The South responded with enthusiasm and the Democratic remainder in the North, and there were a few dissatisfied Republicans who also came. It was declared to be a meeting for the restoration of peace and the reconstruction of the Union. Good fellowship was to be the order of the day, and dramatic effect was sought for in a grand procession of delegates entering the Wigwam, two and two, each pair a well-known Confederate citizen or soldier arm in arm with as well known a Unionist, if possible. That effect was somewhat marred by the refusal of Republican journalists to speak of the Wigwam otherwise than as Noah's Ark, into which went all manner of beasts, both clean and unclean; but worse was to follow. Of course the assembled delegates eloquently and enthusiastically sustained and eulogized the President's policy. They did indeed do an important work of bringing together political elements for future party action. It was an exceedingly noteworthy gathering of influential American citizens, but, so far as any present effect upon votes was concerned, the Wigwam might almost as well



have been the Ark, for the flood had already risen.

In express rejoinder to the summons for that convention, a call had gone out for a convention of loyal Southerners, to be held in Philadelphia on September 3d, and for a twin gathering of delegates from all the North and West. The assemblage of Southern Unionists was large ; that of Northern delegates and leading men was larger ; and the joint meeting held was grandly imposing.

The condition of the loyal population, both black and white, of the States recently composing the Confederacy, was depicted in fervid addresses, the substance of which was combined in one and sent out as an indictment of the President's policy and as a vindication of Congress. The effect produced upon the voters of the North was even greater than had been expected, and the general excitement alarmed the more thoughtful men of the South. September 6th had been named as the day for laying the cornerstone of a monument to Stephen A. Douglas, at Chicago. Great preparations for the occasion had been made, and the President had been invited to take part in the ceremonial. He left Washington, August 28th, accompanied by a party of distinguished gentlemen, including members of his Cabinet, and, during part of the journey, General Grant and Admiral Farragut. The route selected was by way of Philadelphia, New York, and Albany. Crowds assembled to meet the President at each of the stopping places publicly announced in advance, and the temper of these crowds manifested itself in an

exceedingly unpleasant manner. Mr. Johnson unwisely attempted a series of electioneering stump speeches in defence of his policy, and the result was uniformly detrimental. He spoke of the Thirty-ninth Congress contemptuously as being "no Congress," in the absence of the representatives of the South, and his hearers responded with derisive resentment. He described himself as having "swung around the entire circle" of the public service, from alderman to President, and the press reporters at once described his present tour as "a swinging round the circle." The Opposition movement of 1866 was more damaged by ridicule than by argument, and the November elections provided for a Congress more fiercely hostile to the Administration than the Thirty-ninth had been.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Cabinet Changes—The President and the Army—Reducing the Power of the Executive—The Reconstruction Act—The Tenure of Office Bill—The Fortieth Congress—Washington Society—The Alaska Purchase—General Grant in the Cabinet—First Appearances of the Impeachment Project.*

THE Cabinet of President Johnson underwent important changes during the year 1866. Mr. Seward continued in charge of the Department of State, with a silent but powerful conservative influence upon the entire Administration. Postmaster-General William Dennison was succeeded in July by Alexander W. Randall, of Wisconsin; Attorney-General James Speed, by Henry Stanbery, of Ohio; and Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan, by O. H. Browning, of Illinois. The most important change was in the attitude toward the President of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

Congress assembled on December 3d. A few days later Hon. George S. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, received a message requesting him to call at the War Office. He complied, and was no sooner in the Secretary's private room than the latter turned upon him, remarking earnestly: "I am more con-

cerned for the fate of the country than at any time during the war !”

Mr. Stanton was accustomed to the use of strong expressions, but the reasons which he gave for his anxiety were sufficient to secure the thorough concurrence of Mr. Boutwell. The most dangerous symptom of the situation, as presented by Mr. Stanton, was an attempt by the President to gather into his own hands the war power of the nation, and his assuming to issue orders directly to officers of the army, without even the knowledge of the Secretary of War or the general. Even Lincoln had treated with much respect the established regulations governing the transmission of orders, yet the utmost that could at once be said was that the President was exhibiting strong indications of an understanding that Grant and Stanton were not among the supporters of his policy. There was as yet no express provision of law preventing the Constitutional commander-in-chief from doing that very thing, and he would surely veto any bill attempting to narrow his authority. There was one bill to come before the House, however, which the President was not at all likely to veto, and George S. Boutwell was to have much to do with its preparation. The Army Appropriation Bill, without the passage of which the army must disband, was not reported until February 5th, 1867. Its second section, as reported, contained substantially the following important provision :

“ That the headquarters of the General of the Army shall be at Washington, and that he shall not be

detailed for service elsewhere except at his own request or by the previous approval of the Senate ; that all orders and instructions relating to military operations issued by the President or the Secretary of War shall be issued through the General of the Army, or, in case of his disability, through the officer next in command ; and, finally, that all orders issued in any other manner shall be null and void, and that the officer issuing such orders, and all officers who shall obey them, knowing that they had been issued in any other manner, shall be alike guilty of a misdemeanor."

The bill was not passed until March 2d, and by that time its second section had become a part of a species of legislative net with whose strong meshes the President was vainly struggling.

Congress began work vigorously, and was resisted with tenacious courage. The bill to give the right of suffrage to colored men in the District of Columbia was passed, was vetoed, and was again passed over the veto. A bill was passed depriving the President of the power to proclaim a general amnesty, and he quietly ignored it. The bill for the admission of Nebraska as a State imposed as a condition the proviso that no law should be passed by its people in any manner denying the right of suffrage to any person because of race or color. On this account the act came back with a veto message, and required a passage over the veto. The majority in Congress grew more compact and determined daily. Measures were adopted convening the Fortieth Congress immediately upon the adjournment of

the Thirty-ninth, and providing in like manner for succeeding Congresses, that their first assemblings might be free from any requirement of an Executive summons.

On January 7th, 1867, a resolution was offered in the House demanding the impeachment of the President. It met with a general expression of disapproval, but was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and their report, made on March 2d, too late for action, lay upon the table when Congress adjourned.

The most important legislation of the session, to the minds of all men, were the Reconstruction Act, so called, and the Tenure of Office Bill.

The "Bill to provide efficient governments for the insurrectionary States," the first of these measures, was the carefully elaborated Congressional plan of reconstruction about to be forcibly substituted for that of the President. By it the entire area of nine States of the South was divided into five districts, each under a military commander directly responsible to the General of the Army. Each of these officers was entrusted with authority, in his district, to exercise and direct all the functions of civil government until the citizens thereof should organize the State or States included, should ratify the Constitutional Amendments, and should be restored to relations with the Union by act of Congress. The bill was passed, was vetoed, and was passed over the veto. Twenty years afterward it was remarked of it by Senator, then Congressman, James G. Blaine :

“The whole issue presented by the bill was but another of the countless phases of that prolonged and fundamental contest between those who believed that guarantees should be exacted from the rebel States, and those who believed that those States should be freely admitted, without conditions and without restraint, to all the privileges which they had thrown away in their mad effort to destroy the Government.”

The Tenure of Office Bill was in like manner carried over a veto. It provided that civil officers should remain in office until the appointment and confirmation of their successors; that members of the Cabinet should be removed only with the consent of the Senate; that when Congress was not in session the President should have authority to suspend but not to remove any official, and that in case the Senate, at its next session, should refuse or fail to ratify any suspension, the official so dealt with should be restored to his place and duties.

By these twin measures the President was shorn of power over the processes of reconstruction. While they were pending in Congress, ten of the States of the South had taken action upon the Fourteenth Amendment, giving to colored men the ballot, and all emphatically rejected it. Their white populations, by large majorities, were in full accord with the President's views, and almost forgave him the action he had taken during the Civil War.

The Fortieth Congress organized with the Republican Party in absolute control of its legislation. A full two-thirds vote in Senate and House of Representatives was ready to deal with any veto message or other act of the President. Nearly all of the leading spirits of the Thirty-ninth Congress had been

re-elected, and the nominally new body was but the old endowed with new authority, energy, and zeal.

The preceding Winter had been notable in the social annals of the capital. At no previous time had Washington society so brilliantly represented the wealthy and cultivated classes of the nation. There was no war news to interfere with gayeties, and numbers of Southerners whom the war had made famous made their appearance continually at receptions and social gatherings, in evidence that the military lines existed no longer. They came also to strengthen the hands of the President and to confer with representatives of the party at the North, which was organizing to resist the overwhelming domination of Republicanism. Society was sadly cut up into cliques and coteries, and the brilliant receptions at the Executive Mansion were avoided by men and women who refused to speak of the President respectfully. They were brilliant, nevertheless, and Andrew Johnson believed, with fierce sincerity, that the praises heaped upon him were genuine and just, that he was upholding the Constitutional rights of the Executive as well as of the States, and that the entire South and nearly half of the North, a majority of the nation, regarded him as their champion.

In a certain sense he was so, but without possessing the moral or mental qualities which might have enabled him to become their leader. Only a man of the nature vaguely described as "great," such a man as Lincoln, could have so expanded and risen



with the requirements of the occasion as to have satisfied and controlled them.

There was, for a time, a strong feeling in Congress that no more needed to be done directly against the President. It was manifested when, March 7th, 1867, soon after the organization, Mr. James M. Ashley, of Ohio, presented a resolution of impeachment. It was coldly received, but was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, with power to take testimony, to send for persons and papers, and to sit, for those purposes, during the recess of Congress. It was generally believed that in this manner a few men of extreme views, hot-heads or alarmists, had been accommodated and silenced, and that so the whole subject had been pigeon-holed in a committee room. So it would have been but for events which nobody then anticipated.

On March 30th the treaty with Russia was concluded for the purchase of Alaska, and Congress was shortly called upon for the required appropriation of money. No haste was made, but there was much good-humored fun in the speeches of the members, who grumbled at paying so much gold for so much mist and ice. Friendship for Russia carried the day at last, and the Alaska Bill passed the House on July 27th, 1868, more than a year after its first introduction. The diplomatic transaction was the work of Mr. Seward rather than of Mr. Johnson, but forms a notable feature of the latter's Administration.

General Grant entered upon his duties under the

Reconstruction Act on March 11th, 1867, and appointed five of the most distinguished officers of the army to the command of the designated districts. His position, partaking of both civil and military authority, was altogether without precedent. The President considered it also without Constitutional warrant, but was induced to waive his objections, to accept the unavoidable, and to invite the general to regular attendance at the meetings of the Cabinet, whenever matters relating to the reconstruction of the South were under discussion. The first meeting he so attended was held on May 23d, and the constitutionality of the several related acts of Congress was the subject presented for discussion. The action of the district commanders, to that date, was involved necessarily, and General Grant took strong ground in defence of his subordinates. He declared his personal belief in the constitutionality of the laws, but added that that was a matter for the Supreme Court, not for him, and that he should obey them as long as they remained upon the statute book without any competent adverse decision. No fault was to be found with such a position, and the general's prudence prevented any unpleasant altercation. He proceeded cautiously, though energetically, in the discharge of the duties assigned to him, gaining to a remarkable degree the confidence of the people and of Congress. He also rendered the President an important personal service when summoned, July 18th, 1867, before the Judiciary Committee, busied in the collection of impeachment materials. The general's testimony put an end to

a number of exaggerated reports and statements concerning the language and action of Mr. Johnson, and occasioned a perceptible subsidence of the impeachment fever.

All the departments of the Government were in good hands, and a vast amount of work was in rapid progress. Retrenchment and reduction were the watchwords of the day. The revenue was increasingly satisfactory, and the monthly payments made upon the more reachable forms of the national debt were such as astonished the world by giving a sure promise of its ultimate extinction. The prostrated agricultural interests of the South were attaining a truly wonderful restoration. All over the country there was great activity in manufacturing, mining, railway, and other enterprises. The asperities of political strife were toning down somewhat under the mollifying influence of busy prosperity. Even the Southern people discovered that good order was a good thing, and that well administered military rule, aimed at the restoration of civil authority, was by no means an oppressive tyranny. The chiefs of the Republican Party rested in the assurance that they had fully vindicated the Constitutional rights of the legislative branch of the Federal Government; that they had baffled, not to say manacled, the too grasping hands of the Executive; that they had secured the right of suffrage for colored citizens, and that in so doing they had created a trustworthy Republican Party constituency in every district of the South.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Suspension of Edwin M. Stanton—The Contest over the War Department—Impeachment of the President—The Highest Tribunal of the Nation—The Trial and the Verdict—Readmission of the Seceded States—Election of President Grant—Last Days and Death of Andrew Johnson.*

THE Cabinet discussions of the Reconstruction and Tenure of Office laws had intensified the already existing differences between the President and the Secretary of War. About the middle of the Summer of 1867 Mr. Johnson plainly intimated to Mr. Stanton that the latter's resignation would be accepted. No notice was taken of the suggestion, and on August 5th it was changed into a formal and direct request, to be met by as formal and direct a refusal. Under the Tenure of Office law, Mr. Stanton was not subject to removal, Congress not being in session, but only to suspension, to await the future action of the Senate, the constitutionality of the law itself being denied by the President and seriously questioned by many able jurists. On August 12th a written order of the President suspended Mr. Stanton, while another order directed General Grant to perform the duties of Secretary of War *ad interim*, in addition to those already in his hands. Mr. Stan-

ton surrendered his office and papers to the general under protest, and the latter took charge, as commanded by his superior officer, the commander-in-chief. There was no break in the personal relations between Stanton and Grant, for the latter had earnestly protested against the removal of the former in a communication in writing addressed to the President about August 1st.

There was an appearance that Mr. Johnson intended to take into his own hands, so far as might be possible, the supreme direction of the five military districts of the South. On August 17th he commanded General Grant to remove General Sheridan from the Fifth District, composed of Louisiana and Texas, and to appoint in his stead General George H. Thomas. A similar order was shortly issued with reference to General Sickles, of the Second District, composed of the Carolinas, and the alarm was given to Congress, then not in session, that the President proposed to transfer to his own uses the elaborate reconstruction machinery which its wisdom had provided. The alarm would have been greater but that the language and action of General Grant was such that Republican clubs all over the country were already presenting his name enthusiastically as the party candidate for President at the next election.

The Fortieth Congress reassembled in November angry, but entirely confident of its own position, and disposed to act with prudent conservatism. On November 25th the report of the majority of the Judiciary Committee on the impeachment resolu-

tion of Mr. Ashley was presented, accompanied by a minority report and by the curious fact that two members of the committee disagreed with both reports. The subject was exhaustively debated on December 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1867, and the impeachment resolution was defeated by a vote of one hundred and eight noes to fifty-seven ayes. It was an emphatic declaration that Andrew Johnson had as yet done nothing which could give the required life and effect to the twelve hundred printed pages of testimony gathered and presented by the committee. His impeachment was therefore needless, impolitic, and probably impracticable.

Four days later, on December 11th, the President sent to the Senate his reasons for the suspension of Edwin M. Stanton. In so doing he acted in strict compliance with the law. On the 14th the Senate formally declared that the reasons assigned for suspension were insufficient, directed Mr. Stanton to resume his duties as Secretary of War, and notified General Grant of the action it had taken.

The hour had come to Andrew Johnson for a complete surrender or for an open collision with Congress. He had supposed that General Grant would obey his orders and retain possession of the War Office, and he was greatly surprised and chagrined when the general at once gave way to Mr. Stanton. He reported to the President that his action was in compliance with that of the Senate, but it was wrathfully declared to be a desertion and a disobedience of the orders of the commander-in-chief. A very bitter correspondence followed, which was

afterward made public ; but the decision of the President was made promptly. He declared the removal of Edwin M. Stanton from the post of Secretary of War and the appointment of Lorenzo Thomas, Adjutant-General of the Army, to the vacancy so created. Mr. Stanton refused to yield, and sent a written notification of the President's action to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The war between the legislative and executive branches of the Government of the United States had now reached a crisis which the nation contemplated with extreme anxiety. The Winter holiday vacation was at hand, and Congressmen were willing to go home and talk with their constituents. The immediate comments upon the situation made by an influential part of the Northern press and nearly all the Southern plainly suggested the impolicy of precipitate action. Congress therefore adjourned for the holidays, returned at the end of its vacation, and even then waited during several weeks for the full development of the President's position and of its own.

The American people are conservative rather than hasty, but the tide of popular indignation was rising rapidly, stimulated by reports of the ill-advised utterances of the President and his leading supporters. All men waited and listened, in a suspense which intensified daily, for news of the Congressional action which was understood to be in process of preparation.

It came at last. On February 21st, 1868, John

Covode, of Pennsylvania, offered in the House of Representatives a resolution "That Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors."

The resolution was referred to the Reconstruction Committee, and was reported back favorably on the 22d. The 23d was Sunday, and the consideration of the report was postponed until Monday, the 24th. That day was given up to the debate which took place, and the heated feeling exhibited, the long-suppressed bitterness which burst forth in fiery eloquence of denunciation, was an astonishment to the House itself. "Never," writes Mr. Blaine, "had so many members addressed the House in a single day."

The resolution was adopted by a vote of one hundred and twenty-six ayes to forty-seven noes, with seventeen members absent or not voting. A special committee was appointed to prepare and report articles of impeachment. It consisted of George W. Boutwell, Thaddeus Stevens, John A. Bingham, James F. Wilson, John A. Logan, George W. Julian, and Hamilton Ward.

A formal notification was sent to the Senate, that the necessary preparations might be made by that body for its transformation into the highest judicial tribunal known to the Constitution and laws of the United States. No such trial as was now announced had ever occurred upon this continent, and there had been nothing equal to it in Europe since that of Charles the First of England.

The Committee on Articles of Impeachment pre-



sented their report on February 29th. The managers required by the plan of procedure adopted were chosen by ballot, each taking precedence on the list according to the number of votes received by him. They were John A. Bingham, George S. Boutwell, James F. Wilson, Benjamin F. Butler, Thomas Williams, John A. Logan, and Thaddeus Stevens.

The preparations of the Senate were made with deliberation, but were completed by March 5th. On the 8th a solemn procession marched from the chamber of the House of Representatives to that of the Senate. It consisted of the managers, attended by the entire membership of the House, constituting the grand inquest of the nation. They came to the bar of the Senate, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, and presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. They presented articles of impeachment of Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, which were read by Manager Bingham. When the reading was completed the grand inquest withdrew to its own chamber, and the Senatorial Court of Impeachment adjourned to March 13th, 1868.

On the day appointed the Court of Impeachment sat again. The managers presented themselves, and were responded to by the President's counsel. These were Henry Stanbery, of Ohio, who had resigned the post of attorney-general in order to appear for Mr. Johnson, with Benjamin R. Curtis, of Massachusetts, William M. Evarts, of New York, William S. Groesbeck, of Ohio, and Thomas A. R. Nelson, of Tennessee. They asked for forty days

in which to prepare their answer on behalf of the defendant. Only ten days were given them, and the court adjourned to March 23d.

The articles of impeachment contained a full recital of the several grounds of complaint and accusation, their most important points relating to the President's alleged violation of the Tenure of Office law. In the answer to this it was maintained that he had but undertaken to prepare a test case in order to have the constitutionality of that law determined by the Supreme Court. He was defended from first to last with unsurpassed ability, and the managers gave reason for the somewhat caustic criticism afterward made by Senator Blaine, that "The President was impeached for one series of misdemeanors and tried for another series." The entire deplorable story of Southern disorders during the chaotic time following the Civil War was recited in the voluminous testimony presented and in the arguments of managers and counsel.

The trial continued, from day to day, until April 4th, when the presentation of testimony was completed. The court then took a recess of five days, and the arguments for the defence began on the 9th. The discussion was closed by the senators themselves, no less than twenty-nine of them speaking.

On May 11th a vote was taken upon the last article, which was in the nature of a summary, in order to test the views of the Court of Impeachment. It was an hour of almost unendurable excitement and suspense, for several senators had maintained silent reserve, and their decisions were as yet unknown.

One after another all answered to their names, and it was announced that thirty-five senators had voted for conviction and nineteen for acquittal. A change of one voice from the negative to the affirmative would have given the two-thirds vote required for conviction. The court then adjourned to May 26th, and the intervening days were a time of painful anxiety. Numerous reports were circulated as to changes taking place in the opinions and proposed action of several senators, but when the court re-assembled and the remaining articles were voted upon, the result was the same as before, and a verdict of acquittal was duly entered. So narrow an escape was by no means a victory for Andrew Johnson, the best point made in his favor before the world being that which was based upon the known partisan character of the tribunal before which he had been brought for trial. Before an entirely unprejudiced court he would undoubtedly have received an acquittal more distinct. Senators who then voted against him, with representatives who voted for his impeachment, were afterward glad that he had not been convicted. Nevertheless, the trial itself constitutes one of the most important events in the political history of the United States. If the verdict of the Senate was wisely rendered, it is no less true that the action of the House of Representatives was wise, and was such as it should have taken. The entire contest between President Johnson and Congress, between the executive and the legislative branches of the general Government, had produced a legal and administrative confusion which, for the

permanent good of the country, required this solemn consummation to set it in order.

President Johnson considered that he had been triumphantly vindicated, and his nominal supporters throughout the country made his acquittal an occasion of political rejoicing ; but they were soon to declare, in a very pointed manner, how weak was his personal hold upon them.

The machinery of government resumed its customary operations without any apparent change in the attitude of its great departments. The seceded States, so called, one by one accepted the terms offered them by the Reconstruction Act, adopted the amendments, and were readmitted to their old places in the Union by acts of Congress which were consecutively vetoed by the President and passed over his veto. As time went on it became more clearly apparent that Congress, like Lincoln during the war, had assumed a kind of dictatorial power, taking warrant from a perilous situation of national affairs, but straining to the uttermost any possible interpretation of its limit of power under the Constitution. It was such an assumption as would not have been tolerated by the people but for cause perceived and understood.

The Republican Party held its National Convention at Chicago on May 26th, 1868, nominating General Grant for President and Schuyler Colfax for Vice-President.

The combined Opposition, taking form more completely as the Democratic Party, held its National Convention in New York City on July 4th,

1868. Even before its organization was completed, its leading membership had declared that the party did not propose to assume the defence of the Administration of Andrew Johnson. Upon the first ballot for a Presidential nomination the votes were : for George H. Pendleton, one hundred and five ; Andrew Johnson, sixty-five ; Sanford G. Church, thirty-four ; Winfield S. Hancock, thirty-three ; Asa Packer, twenty-six ; James S. English, sixteen, and the remainder scattering.

It was but a ballot of inquiry, and the name of Mr. Johnson steadily faded away from subsequent tallies. After three days of balloting and consultation, the convention nominated Horatio Seymour and Francis P. Blair. The political situation was sadly against the party, and its several factors had not yet been brought into working order. It secured for its ticket but eighty votes in the electoral colleges, against two hundred and fourteen given to Grant and Colfax.

President Johnson's remaining months of service were unmarked by any event of special personal interest. No reconciliation took place between him and his antagonists, for he neither sought nor permitted any. After the inauguration of his successor, on March 4th, 1869, he at once returned to his old home in Tennessee.

The Forty-first Congress made a very prompt record of its own perception that a part of the action taken by its predecessor was in the nature of a "war measure." The military districts had ceased to exist as the several States were readmitted, and

now, as early as March 9th, the House of Representatives, without debate or division, and by a vote of one hundred and thirty-six to sixteen, repealed the Tenure of Office Bill. The Senate, indeed, demurred to such a sudden reduction of its powers, and refused to concur; but a committee of conference of the two Houses succeeded in agreeing upon a measure of compromise which was a virtual repeal.

Upon Mr. Johnson's return to Tennessee he announced himself a candidate for United States senator, but his old-time influence was gone, and he was defeated. He remained in comparative retirement, although taking a lively interest in all current politics of the State and of the nation until 1872, when he became a candidate for Congressman at Large from the State. He made a spirited canvass, but he was not in full accord with either of the existing parties, and he was defeated.

Two years more of retirement followed, and then a ray of popularity returned. He was again elected to the Senate of the United States, and took his seat in the Spring of 1875. He made but one noteworthy speech, consisting mainly of a severe criticism of General Grant. At the close of the session he returned to Tennessee. While on a visit to his daughter, residing near Carter's Ferry, in that State, he was attacked with paralysis, and the end of his eventful, stormy, useful, and honorable life came upon July 29th, 1875. Taking it all in all, the history of America contains but few records more worthy of study and of respect than that of the poor white boy, the ignorant tailor's apprentice, who

taught himself how to read, whose young wife taught him how to write, who fought his way to such marked eminence, and whose very faults and errors resulted from his utter inability to surrender or compromise his opinions.

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